WORKERS HAMMER 4
No 257 ◆ SPRING 2026 NEWSPAPER OF THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE £1

STOP US-ISRAEL RAMPAGE

Defend Iran!

Saeedi/Getty

The following first appeared as a 28 February Spartacist *supplement.*

The U.S. and Israel have created a trail of utter devastation. Netanyahu has mercilessly butchered the Palestinian people; Trump has attacked and threatened one country after another. Now they are jointly attacking Iran. ***This madness must be stopped! Iran must be defended!***

If the U.S. and Israel succeed in overthrowing the Iranian regime, it will not bring liberation to the Iranian people. They will become slaves of Zionism and imperialism, and the U.S. and Israel will have a free hand to terrorize the region.

The bombs being dropped all over Iran do not distinguish between the regime and the people. Right now, ***to stand with the people of Iran means defending the country against foreign aggression.*** The Iranian people will settle their accounts with the bloody mullahs on their own terms.

If the U.S. and Israel suffer major military blows, or if the international working class comes out in force against this aggression, it would put a wrench in the current offensive and finally stop Trump's rampage. The working class, particularly in the U.S., has an interest in this as Republicans and Democrats drag the country and the entire world down into a spiral of death and misery. For its own interests it must act and ***stop the U.S. war machine!*** ■

Shut down US bases!

Furlong/Getty

As US and Israeli bombs first rained on Iran, Keir Starmer pledged the UK would not get involved. Twenty-four hours later, and after a few insults from Trump, Starmer did what he does best: he U-turned. He approved the use of UK bases for "limited defensive purposes", defined as destroying Iran's missiles "at source", ie, bombing Iran. Just like that, Starmer lent UK support to this murderous carpet-bombing campaign, with British military infrastructure giving crucial help to the US and Israel.

American B-2 stealth bombers, carrying "bunker buster" bombs to pierce underground sites, operate from Diego Garcia. Flights from RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus—the same hub that aided the Gaza genocide with intelligence flights—now intercept drones to shield US assets. But the main assistance to the US happens in Britain itself. Following Starmer's U-turn, B-52 and B-1B bombers swarmed RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, cutting flight times compared to launching from the US, and enabling a relentless high-intensity bombardment. RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk, serves as the "petrol station", its US KC-135 tankers fuelling the slaughter. RAF Lakenheath, also in Suffolk, is home to F-15s and F-35s in transit to the Middle East. RAF Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire provides signals intelligence (SIGINT) to track targets in real time, while RAF Molesworth in Cambridgeshire processes satellite data and provides targets for Fairford's bombers. RAF Croughton in Northamptonshire provides the secure comms link for this global kill chain.

When Starmer says Britain is merely carrying out

"defensive" operations, ***he is lying***. The UK is playing a key role for US imperialism's war of aggression. And this is only the tip of the iceberg of the deep and secretive entanglement of Britain's military with US imperialism. The "special relationship" with the US isn't a matter of policy choice that some prime minister can simply reverse. Britain's role as a junior partner of the US has been built into the state since the Second World War. Britain's nuclear arms depend on the US; its intelligence agencies are fused with American ones; NATO membership is in the armed forces' DNA.

For socialists to concretely oppose this war, what is needed is to build a movement here to ***shut down US bases***. This is vital to help the Iranian people's resistance, but also for British workers. We have no interest in getting dragged into yet another war to maintain US imperial domination. And we have no interest in paying for this through our taxes, further austerity and soaring energy prices. Britain needs radical change. And it starts with kicking out those bases.

Doing this will require serious, working-class struggle against the entire ruling class, for whom being a minion for the US is second nature. But this ***isn't*** what the leaders of the trade unions or left Labour Party politicians have in mind. The main leaders of the unions have reacted to the war by signing the most tepid of statements, criticising the war for being "illegal" and demanding diplomacy. Outrageously, the TUC statement also denounced Iran for defending itself! And, of course, most unions bankroll the very Labour government overseeing the war. As for Corbyn, the few left-Labour MPs and the Greens, rather than organising a serious struggle against Starmer, they are imploring him with pacifist twaddle about "international law"—as if this mattered at all to anyone anymore.

From Labour's Ernest Bevin, who helped create NATO in 1949, to today's Unite leader Sharon Graham, a staunch supporter of the defence industry, there is a deep, rotten tradition of pro-US support embedded in the workers movement. To rid Britain of US bases, we must rid the labour movement of these pro-imperialist swine. And this won't be done with "peace and love" declarations from the backbenches.

Defend Iran against imperialist aggression!
Shut down US bases!
UK bases out of Cyprus! US-UK out of Chagos! ■

A NEW FORMAT FOR *WORKERS HAMMER*

Since its inception in 1984, *Workers Hammer* has been produced as a tabloid-style newsprint. We are moving away from this format in favour of a higher-grade A4 print. This shift reflects what *Workers Hammer* has evolved into: while it was a frequent monthly newspaper in its early years, it is no longer a "news-type" publication. With a reduced frequency, *Workers Hammer* now mainly features lasting articles, guiding our work for a longer period of time. For this purpose, a high-quality A4 format is far more suitable.

This change also intersects a shift in how we, and our international, the ICL, produce content. We now publish leaflets and timely articles more frequently, allowing us to react quickly to developments, as we did in Your Party. We have also expanded our digital presence via our website and social media. Furthermore, *Workers Hammer* now hosts a weekly podcast on YouTube and Spotify, supplementing the ICL's English-language podcast, *SpartTalk*, launched last year. Thus, the physical paper is no longer our primary medium for political intervention.

We encourage our readers to subscribe and donate to help us continue providing the sharp Marxist analysis we are known for. You can do this at iclfi.org/pubs/wh/subscribe. ■

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WORKERS HAMMER 4

Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

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Email: info@workershammer.co.uk
Subscriptions: £5 for 4 issues
Europe outside Britain & Ireland £7, rest of world £9

Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.
The closing date for news in this issue is 21 March 2026.
Printed by Kopykat Printing Limited (trade union)

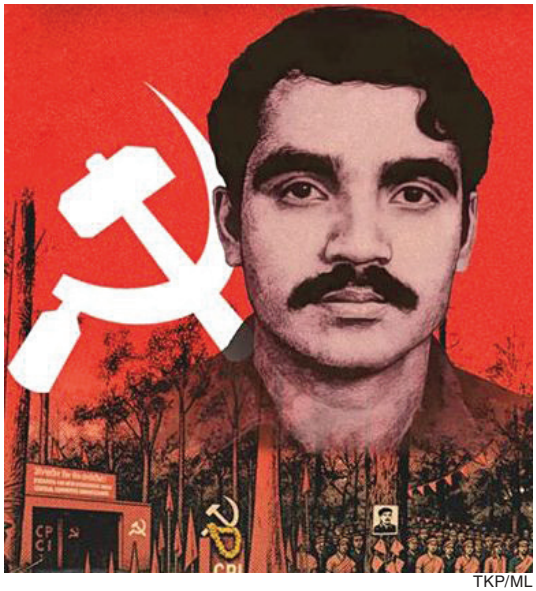
India

Trotskyists defend Maoists
Stop Operation Kagar!

The Modi government launched Operation Kagar (Hindi for "brink") in early 2024 and set itself the deadline of 31 March 2026 as "the last day of Naxalism", the popular term for Maoism in the Indian subcontinent. Anywhere between 60,000-100,000 security personnel, from police to special forces, are deployed in and around the dense forests of Chhattisgarh and Telangana, states with vast mineral reserves and home to Adivasis, or tribal people, Dalits and other oppressed groups in the country.

Operation Kagar marks the latest and most aggressive offensive against Maoism in India. The Indian state has wanted to eliminate Maoism ever since the Naxalbari uprising of 1967 planted red seeds of liberation in the hearts of millions of peasants and other downtrodden people. Successive governments have launched military operations to crush Naxalism, going right back to Operation Steeplechase in the 1970s under Indira Gandhi, India's own Iron Lady. In 2005, one year after the Maoist forces regrouped under the Communist Party of India (Maoist), Congress Prime Minister Manmohan Singh characterised Maoism as the "greatest internal security threat" to India and continued the state's offensive, first by backing local vigilante groups in the extralegal terror campaign called Salwa Judum, and then under the official auspices of Operation Green Hunt in 2009.

One thing must be made clear: the state's assault on the Maoists is a cover for removing all obstacles to ravaging the natural resources of the country by seizing the lands of Adivasis, Dalits and other oppressed peoples. When the mining companies want to expand their operations into the forest heartlands, they displace hundreds of thousands and brazenly murder those who resist and defend their lands by branding them "Maoist terrorists". This has been the playbook for decades. Thus, Operation Kagar is a blank cheque for the state to repress anyone who resists its agenda. The only difference is that it's a licence to kill in the forests, whereas for the "Urban Naxals", it means prolonged ordeals in prison and the courts.



TKP/ML

Basavaraju, Communist Party of India (Maoist) general secretary, murdered last year by Indian state.

Since the start of Operation Kagar, state forces have assassinated several top leaders of CPI (Maoist), countless party cadre and ordinary Adivasis and Dalits. Most notable among these was General Secretary Nambala Keshava Rao, aka Basavaraju, who was killed in an "encounter" in May 2025 after spending 40 years entirely underground. The CPI (Maoist), or at least factions within it, are calling for talks, but the government, sensing the weakness of the movement, forges ahead in its killing spree. A somewhat steady stream of surrenders continues, from leadership and cadre alike.

The Maoist movement is today the weakest it has ever been. This claim is strongly rebuffed by many aligned with the movement, as they see it as an attack or as buying into the state's propaganda. But this is a statement of fact. Denying this won't help; only by recognising reality can we begin to deal with problems of strategy and put the movement in a better defensive position. The movement has gradually weakened over time as a combined result of being slowly ground down by the state, as well as a political strategy which was unable to extend its reach beyond the forest heartlands of the country in any meaningful way. The latter increased the movement's isolation from the masses of the country and thus reinforced its vulnerability and weakness in the face of the state.

The five parliamentary communist parties—the CPI, CPI (Marxist), CPI (ML)-Liberation, Revolutionary Socialist Party, and All India Forward Bloc—issued an appeal on 9 May 2025 to Modi calling for a halt to the government's killings and demanding an "impartial judicial enquiry" instead! This is a complete embarrassment and a betrayal. The Maoists are guilty of ***nothing*** but fighting to defend the oppressed. If these parties had a backbone and confidence in their own programmes, they would mobilise the millions in their trade unions and other organisations to demonstrate the united strength of the left. But they act no differently than human rights and civil society organisations, revealing the rot of official communism in India.

The current state of affairs is a problem not just for the Maoists, but for the entire communist movement and the masses of India in general, because it is about the fight to defend *jal*, *jangal* and *jameen (*water, forest and land). We Trotskyists stand together with the heroic fighters in the heartlands of India who have been suffering bloody repression, and call on the communist movement to come to their defence by mobilising their trade union and peasant organisations.

For a united front of the Indian left to defend Maoists!
Workers of India: demand an end to Operation Kagar!
Lal Salaam to the fallen heroes!
Jal, jangal, jameen hamari hai! ■

Don't underestimate US imperialism

Koren/Alamy

by G Perrault

The following was issued as a Spartacist *supplement on 16 March.*

From the mainstream media to YouTubers and the revolutionary left, there is growing unanimity that the U.S.-Israeli offensive against Iran will end in defeat. As communists, we strive for such an outcome and firmly stand in defense of Iran against the ongoing imperialist attack. However, it is precisely because we have a militant stance in this conflict that ***we must warn against the danger of complacency.***

All the way back to October 2023, we have been told by countless analysts that Israel has no off-ramp, that it will run out of ammunition, that it will collapse from within. But none of this has happened. Israel and the U.S. have dictated the tempo of events. They have launched increasingly aggressive offensives and paused them when convenient. The Axis of Resistance has fought back, but it has constantly been on the back foot, leading to multiple setbacks and a weakening position.

From mainstream press to YouTubers, all proclaim imminent US defeat. We warn against danger of complacency.

While the latest round of clashes is taking place at a higher level of intensity, nothing so far shows a fundamental change in the strategic orientation of the respective parties. Why should we have any confidence that this time the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) will fight on until it inflicts a major strategic defeat on the U.S. and Israel?

We cannot once again rely on the Axis of Resistance or on the promise of future political discontent in the West. The left and anti-imperialist forces must put their own strategy forward, one that opposes the current onslaught but also provides a real path to throwing the U.S. out of West Asia.

A new paradigm

The first thing to understand is that the world we live in today is not that of the early 2000s. In 2003 Bush and Blair went to great lengths to diplomatically justify their attack against Iraq. Today, Trump and Netanyahu couldn't care less. It is not so much the personalities of the leaders that have changed. Rather, it is the political era that is now fundamentally different.

After decades of relative stability, the world is now entering a dangerous downward spiral in which the U.S. is acting with ever-growing aggression and irrationality to maintain its hegemony. On a regional scale, this is the course Israel has followed since October 7, launching increasingly rash attacks on countries throughout the region.

To get a sense of what this new era will look like, we must look further back than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and even the bloody conflicts of the Cold War, to World War II, when the entire world was plunged into an infernal cycle of mass slaughter and destruction. This is what happens when imperialist powers are pushed into a corner. This is the prospect the future holds.

But this does not mean that we are on a straight line to World War III or that the U.S. will be ready to wage total war against Iran. There will be resistance and setbacks on this road. Rather, it means we are in a world where the general trend is toward a rising level of violence and economic chaos.

But despite all the speeches about the end of the rules-based order, many commentators still look at the war with Iran through an old lens. They underestimate the degree to which the U.S. rulers will be ready to accept economic chaos and the suffering of their own people. What would have been unacceptable a few years ago is now viewed as the necessary price to pay to keep the world under the American boot. With this new paradigm, we cannot assess the outcome of a war simply through electoral results, symbolic victories and short-term economic disruption. We must look at the balance of forces among the parties, their internal coherence and their resolve to fight.

U.S.-Israeli war aims

Every commentator under the sun has complained that Trump has no clear objective and is constantly changing his narrative. His administration is truly incompetent. However, it is wrong to think that the U.S. and Israel do not have a clear strategic objective in this war. Long before October 7, Israel, aided by the U.S., has been clear that it seeks to ***roll back Iranian power in the region and eliminate it as a counterweight***. The current war is simply a continuation of this campaign.

Whether in Gaza, Syria, Lebanon or now Iran, the Israelis have pursued their objective by assassinating their enemies, degrading their military capacities and grinding the entire social fabric of Israel's rivals into the ground. Unlike the Iraq and Afghan wars, for which the U.S. devoted significant resources toward establishing puppet regimes, there is no such

Nikoubazl/Alamy

"We are thinking only of the enemy's complete surrender."
—Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, 11 March

Platt/Getty

"I personally apologise to neighbouring countries that were affected by Iran's actions."
—President Masoud Pezeshkian, 7 March

concern in the current conflict.

Of course, Trump and Netanyahu would love to bring down the Iranian Islamic Republic and score a clear political win. But ultimately this is secondary to their objective of degrading Iran's ability to project regional power.

The military situation

More than two weeks into the conflict, the Iranian regime has not collapsed. It continues to have the ability to significantly disrupt the economy of the Gulf and, with the help of Hezbollah, target Israel. The blocking of the Strait of Hormuz and the targeting of oil and gas infrastructure have the potential to cause major disruptions to the world economy. Iran has been able to target certain American (and presumably Israeli) military installations, but it cannot touch the U.S. military-industrial complex or thwart its ability to bomb Iran. So far, American and Israeli forces appear to have suffered minimal casualties.

While the Israeli and American aerial bombing campaign has not destroyed Iran's ability to strike (nor is it likely to), it has indisputably caused major economic and military damage. However, short of a full-scale ground invasion, an unlikely prospect, there is no way to fully defeat the IRGC militarily. The U.S., Israel and their Gulf allies have been able to intercept a significant proportion of the drones and missiles launched from Iran. But this ability will diminish over time as the supply of interceptor missiles decreases.

Based on this picture, it appears that ***neither side can realistically eliminate the military threat posed by the other.*** The outcome of the conflict is thus highly dependent on each side's ability and will to sustain the war.

If Iran continues to strike Israel and the Gulf when air defense missiles are depleted, disrupt oil flows to the point where they provoke a major economic crisis or inflict significant military casualties, it could potentially deal a real strategic blow that would impede future aggression.

However, if, on the contrary, it once again accepts a settlement when convenient for the U.S., we will likely see only a pause until the next round of attacks. Moreover, in such a scenario, the damage Iran will have inflicted will surely pale in comparison to the devastating long-term impact of the bombing campaign on Iranian society. As such, a lot hinges on the IRGC's ability and determination to pursue and escalate the conflict.

Will the IRGC stay the course?

In his first public declaration, Iran's new Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, assured everyone that "we won't forgo avenging the blood of your martyrs." The puppet president, Masoud Pezeshkian, in what looked like a coordinated declaration, stated:

> "The only way to end this war—ignited by the Zionist regime and U.S.—is recognizing Iran's legitimate rights, payment of reparations, and firm international guarantees against future aggression."

Because of these declarations as well as statements by the IRGC, many are convinced that Iran will pursue the struggle regardless of U.S. and Israeli desires to eventually settle the conflict. The argument is that given the intensity of the current attack and direct U.S. participation, Iran cannot accept stopping the conflict short of inflicting a stinging defeat on its enemies. To assess how likely the IRGC is to maintain this posture, we must look at some of the factors weighing on its determination.

First there is Iran's international position. Within the Gulf itself, Iran is trying to balance a vigorous defense with its reluctance to open a total war with its neighbors. If it sustains and expands its operations, it could find itself totally isolated in the region. This possibility is somewhat countered by Iran's two major partners, Russia and China. But far from being fully behind Iran's pursuit of an extended campaign, both will likely seek an early resolution. Russian and Chinese billionaires have deep ties to the Gulf countries, much of China's oil comes through the Strait of Hormuz, and both countries have signaled that they want a return to stability.

Of greater consequence is the internal front. While there is undoubtedly a strong sentiment of national unity in the current war, the underlying reality of Iranian society is one of sharp polarization, with growing layers of the country opposing the regime. The protests in January and the brutal repression that followed are indicative of a deep rupture.

Popular struggle against the Islamic Republic is unlikely at present, but if the war drags on and if the U.S. and Israel indicate they want out, fissures may once again occur. The IRGC knows that it does not have the same kind of popular support as it did during the Iran-Iraq war, and this no doubt will weigh on its determination to pursue the conflict.

Ultimately, the matter will be settled through bureaucratic struggles in the IRGC. The selection of Mojtaba Khamenei as new Supreme Leader points to the hardliners remaining in charge. This should not be seen as a guarantee of future intransigence. Experience shows that there are strong pressures within the regime itself toward conciliation. Despite countless provocations and betrayals by the West and promises by the hardliners to never be fooled again, the course of confrontation has always been followed by appeasement. While

continued on page 20

Why leftists shouldn't celebrate Khamenei's death

Sasan/Getty

by Mansa Kaur

The following article first appeared as a 3 March Spartacist *supplement.*

Many are celebrating the death of Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader. He was assassinated (along with members of his family) in his compound by American and Israeli strikes. The spectrum of those celebrating is quite broad, and it is quite the problem: from Netanyahu, Trump, Reza Pahlavi and the monarchist diaspora in the West, to respectable liberals, huge swaths of Iranian progressives bound together by the Woman, Life, Freedom movement and some leftists. What brings all these disparate forces together, at bottom, is joy at the death of the "dictator."

Let's get some basics out of the way: the murder of the Ayatollah at the hands of the U.S. and Israel is nothing to cheer about. Yes, he had blood on his hands, not just from the Dey uprising (late December—mid January in the Western calendar) but also the tens of thousands of communists and leftists that he and his predecessor butchered after 1979. From the point of view of a large segment of the Iranian masses, he was indeed a dictator. Communists do not support the regime of the mullahs. But when the country is under attack from imperialism, we take a side. And that side is ***with Iran, against the U.S. and Israel***.

These are not mere words or slogans but have material and practical implications: it means being ***for*** the victory of Iran over the imperialists and Zionists and ***against*** its weakening at the hands of the aggressors. Any socialists on the ground, and for that matter all those who want to liberate the masses of Iran, are obliged to fight on the side of Iran to achieve these aims.

The murder of the Ayatollah must be seen within this framework, and from this standpoint it is nothing to be celebrated. This is not a moral question but one of political struggle. The Islamic Republic has been a problem for the U.S. and Israel's designs for the region since 1979. Khamenei, as its central architect for 36 years, defined its overall orientation and was one of the main leaders of the Axis of Resistance. He was thus a principal manifestation of the problem for the imperialists. So, they killed him, as part of their broader plan to eliminate the Islamic Republic as an obstacle to their aims. He was eliminated not by an independent struggle of the masses but by the butchers of Gaza. ***His death, therefore, advances the aims of the imperialists and Zionists.*** To think otherwise is to be a willing idiot.

But many are being willing idiots. To understand this, we must examine the spectrum of all those celebrating Khamenei's death. On one end is the imperialist/Zionist death machine, which justifies its aggression in part through talk of helping the "Iranian people" to rise up against the regime. The liberals in the West, in typical fashion, all of a sudden forget they hate Trump and nod sanctimoniously, parroting the propaganda of their own governments about the evil and authoritarian Ayatollah.

And while a lot of Iranian progressives and leftists are against the war and denounce the imperialists and Zionists for bombing schools, they skip over the fact that it was ***literally the same forces of death and the same bombs*** that also killed Khamenei. This does not seem to matter to them as they celebrate his death. Why? Again, because Khamenei was a dictator, so good riddance. They are so consumed by their hatred for the Islamic Republic and are so exasperated by their desire to be rid of the regime that they have no problem that it is the forces of genocide that are assassinating their leaders. They breathe a sigh of relief, lamenting only that the Ayatollah was not held accountable by the people.

And then there are those dilettantes on the left who are incapable of seeing the distinction between an imperialist power wreaking havoc around the world and an authoritarian and theocratic capitalist country oppressed by imperialism. Burying this fundamental Leninist distinction, they hop on this wretched bandwagon, denounce both sides as warmongers and cheer the death of the dictator while screeching "no war but class war." Some organizations, like the Worker-communist Party of Iran, cross the line completely, blaming the Islamic Republic's 47-year existence for provoking U.S.-Israeli aggression.

This current state of affairs is a problem. To those Iranian progressives, leftists and anti-monarchists who don't want their country to be bombed but are happy seeing the blows against the regime, we must be frank: In the current context, to cheer

Valcic/Alamy Asgaripour/Reuters

Left: Monarchists cheer killing of Ayatollah Khamenei, London, 1 March. Right: Woman mourns Supreme Leader at 6 March anti-US/Israel rally in Tehran.

the death of Khamenei puts you in the camp of Trump and Netanyahu. We understand the pain, anger, helplessness and exhaustion you feel. But it matters ***how*** you fight the regime.

To fight effectively, you must undermine the regime's source of strength, that is, its appeal as a force standing up to imperialism and to Zionism. This appeal persists, despite being eroded domestically in the recent period. It persists because the country and the whole region are defined by subjugation to imperialism. From U.S.-backed regime change in 20th-century Iran itself to Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan—imperialist devastation binds whole layers of the masses to anti-imperialist forces. By cheering the Ayatollah's death, you drive these layers further into the arms of the regime, strengthening it instead of undermining it. Just look at the huge protests following Khamenei's death, from Enghelab Square in Tehran to Kashmir, Pakistan, Iraq and Nigeria. To undermine this appeal, ***you must become the leaders of the anti-imperialist struggle***, and merge it with the struggle to liberate women, the oppressed nationalities and the working masses of Iran from the clutches of imperialism.

Why leftists shouldn't mourn Khamenei's death

Khamenei's death crystalizes the problem of the international left when it comes to Iran. In opposition to the jubilant trend, the other side mourns the "martyr." This includes many shades of the pro-Palestine movement in the Middle East, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and other "campists." For instance, in its obituary for Khamenei, the PFLP writes: "We bid farewell to this revolutionary fighter" and "affirm that his passing represents a loss for the forces of global resistance seeking to break American hegemony and liquidate the Zionist project."

This view is entirely misplaced. Yes, Iran is a thorn in the side of the U.S. and Israel. But its entire strategy is to neither "liquidate the Zionist project" nor "break American hegemony" in the region. Just look at Palestine. Iran did not act to decisively stop the genocide. Instead, its strategy sought to gradually shift the balance of forces by "boiling the Israeli frog slowly." The result? Key leaders of the Axis of Resistance were killed with relative ease by Israel. Then Iran was pounded in the 12-day war, and now it is being bombed again. Unable to decisively challenge the imperialists but still posing enough of a problem, Iran has been slowly choked by imperialist sanctions. And unable to provide any solutions to this, it turned toward more repression and massacred thousands as they rose up to protest their declining conditions.

These are elements not of a winning anti-imperialist strategy but of a losing one. This is because the "anti-imperialism" of the mullahs is based on maintaining their own privileged and repressive rule. Meanwhile, they prevent a united struggle of the masses. Why? Because such a development would challenge their own rule. The strategy of the Ayatollahs in fact buys into the religious and national divisions that keep the masses weak and the imperialists happy. This is as true on the domestic front as it is for the region, and this ultimately renders the regime of the Ayatollahs an obstacle to liquidating Zionism and breaking American regional hegemony.

The death of Khamenei is objectively a blow against Iran in the war with the U.S. and Israel, the two bloodiest forces on the planet today. It is not to be celebrated, but nor is it to be mourned. From 1979 to today, the main problem of the left has been to effectively challenge the mullahs. It has flip-flopped between denouncing them completely and supporting them in the struggle against imperialism. This polarization is growing within Iranian society itself. To go forward, it is necessary to bridge this chasm and ***unite the masses***. For this to happen, both trends must overcome their respective failures and merge the task to defend Iran with that of liberating the masses. Let us not repeat past failures but draw their lessons, no matter how emotionally difficult they are, and apply them to change reality ***now***. ■

No 70
May 2025

spartacist.org/en/70

Burke/ZUMA; Lee/Alamy

The fallacy of the inter-imperialist analysis

The following, issued on 28 February, is an ICL submission to the Meeting of Internationalist Forces scheduled for May.

Since Trump has returned to office, he has imposed tariffs on most of the world, bombed Iran, bombed Nigeria, supported the genocide in Gaza, kidnapped the president of Venezuela, threatened Mexico, Greenland and Colombia (to name only these) and is literally starving Cuba. As we write, the U.S. and Israel are bombing Iran, threatening a major war. Then there is China, focused on selling cheap EVs and solar panels.

Is this what a period of rising inter-imperialist rivalries looks like? One side on the offense while the other barely does anything in response? If China is challenging the U.S. for hegemony, why isn't it using its huge military power to seriously protect its allies? Why is it barely using its economic power against the U.S.?

The answer is simple: ***China is not vying for world domination***, and the world situation is not defined by inter-imperialist rivalries. Rather, it remains defined by the erratic and aggressive attempts by the U.S. to maintain its global empire.

What does Trump want?

There has been much talk about the National Security Strategy of the Trump administration and how it supposedly proves that the U.S. is no longer world hegemon. Sure, the document states that the U.S. will no longer interfere in every inch of the globe. But it says this only so that resources can be better focused on stopping major competitors.

Trump's "Donroe" doctrine does not limit U.S. power to the Western Hemisphere. It proposes to focus on Latin America because it sees it as a weak link in China's growing reach. Meanwhile, it wants a Middle East dominated by Israel, a political realignment in Europe on the terms of the American right (not a break with the trans-Atlantic alliance!) and to maintain U.S. primacy in the Pacific. Hardly an isolationist policy.

Trump is very clear that his aggressive foreign policy is aimed at ***shoring up U.S. power*** and ***reversing U.S. decline***. Beyond maybe parts of Africa and Eastern Ukraine, there is no area of the world where the U.S. is agreeing to pull back for other powers to take over. If the Trump foreign policy proves anything, it is that the U.S. will not let go of its global empire without a rabid fight causing untold devastation.

Peaceful imperialism?

There is no doubt that China has huge economic interests around the world. There is also no doubt that China's foreign and economic policies are guided by the interests of Chinese capitalists and the bureaucrats of the Communist Party of China (CPC). But these factors alone do not make China an imperialist power. No empire in the history of the world existed on the basis of economic strength alone. Imperialism needs military force like fire needs air.

But China has not been at war since 1979! We are supposed to believe that China became an imperialist world power after 1992 without firing a single shot. How is this possible? Has imperialism become pacifist? Or are the Marxist theoreticians of "Chinese imperialism" maybe mistaken? To ask the question is to answer it.

If China were imperialist, surely it would use its military to defend its foreign interests, like every other imperialist power has always done. Yet it did nothing when Venezuela, China's closest partner in Latin America, to whom it has loaned 100 billion dollars, was attacked by the U.S. It also did nothing when Iran, a BRICS+ partner and a key supplier of oil, was attacked in the 12-day war. What about Pakistan? What did China do when the U.S. orchestrated the removal of President Imran Khan in favor of an American pawn? Nothing. And despite the growing number of countries defaulting on their debts, there are no signs of the Chinese military or secret services being used to collect.

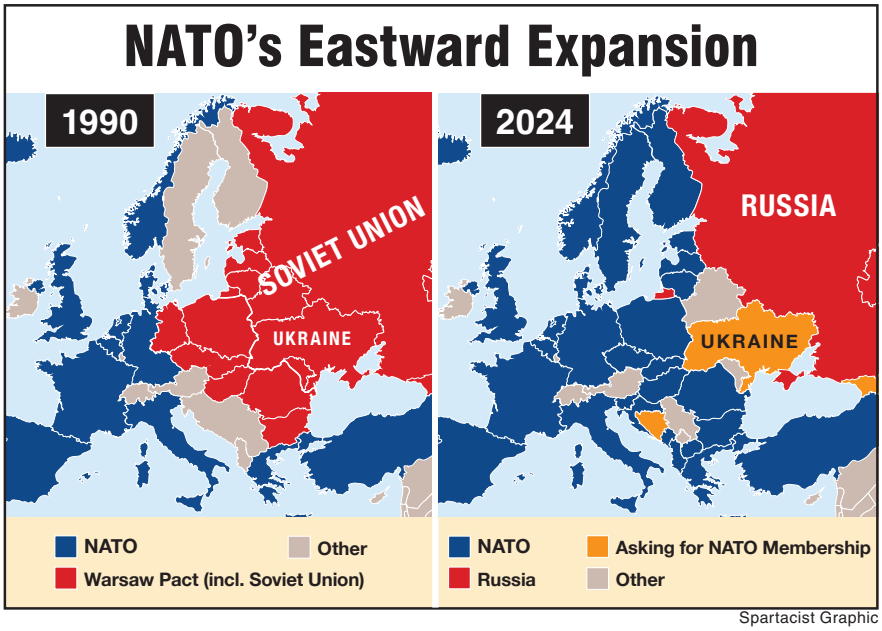
Why does an "imperialist power" show such extreme reluctance to use force to defend its foreign economic interests? How do the Marxists who consider China imperialist explain this? Easy, they ignore the question.

The case of Taiwan

It is true that in the case of Taiwan, the CPC does threaten intervention. But this has nothing to do with the classic model of colonial expansionism. Remember, Taiwan's official name remains the ***Republic of China***. This name was not imposed by Beijing; it was chosen by the founding father of modern Taiwan and butcher of the Shanghai proletariat, General Chiang

Kai-shek. Taiwan exists as a separate state only because it was the last refuge of the counterrevolutionary forces of the Guomindang in 1949 and because it has been useful to the U.S. as an anti-Communist bastion.

True, most of the population in Taiwan today does not want to join the People's Republic of China (PRC)—largely because of the reactionary rule of the CPC bureaucracy. But this does not change the fact that the Taiwan-PRC conflict is an ***unfinished civil war***; it is not driven by imperialist economic interests. The proof is that nothing fundamental has changed in the CPC's policy toward Taiwan between the time when there were no capitalists at all in mainland China and now. The problem with the CPC's policy is not that it seeks reunification. It is that it does so through bureaucratic means that conciliate the capitalists and alienate the workers of Taiwan.



Spartacist Graphic

Where is the Chinese empire?

We do not say that the CPC will never use force to defend its interests—it certainly does so to suppress its population and to intimidate Filipino fisherfolk. We argue that ***there is no Chinese empire***. The PRC has no real vassals and no real zone of influence beyond its borders and a few rocks in the sea.

Moreover, the actions of the CPC bureaucracy cannot be explained through the prism of an aggressively expanding imperialist bourgeoisie. Rather, they must be understood as coming from a Stalinist bureaucracy that seeks peaceful coexistence with imperialism in order to build "socialism with Chinese characteristics." Above all else, the aim of China's economic, foreign and military policy is to make sure that never again will it be at the mercy of foreign imperialism.

Clearly, China is not acting like Germany, Japan or the U.S. in the early 20th century, as they were vying for their place in the sun. But we don't need to go that far. Just look at last year! It is absurd to argue that the U.S. and China play the same fundamental role on the world scene. Beyond an obvious analytical mistake, equating the two represents a real capitulation to the propaganda of Western and Japanese imperialism.

Russian expansionism?

If China is reluctant to use military force, the same cannot be said of Russia. In Georgia, Syria and Ukraine, Russia has deployed its armed forces beyond its borders to defend the interests of its ruling class. This being said, Russia does not play a significant role in the syphoning off of surplus value on a global scale. Russia's important political weight in the world stems mainly from its military force and its resistance to U.S. expansionism.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is the U.S. and its allies that have been expanding in Eastern Europe, bringing NATO to the very border of Russia. No one can deny this. The Ukraine conflict started because the EU and NATO attempted to push Russian influence out of Ukraine. This does not justify Russia's invasion. But it shows it is false to view the conflict simply as the result of Russian expansionism. The U.S. expanded to the East until it bit off more than it could chew. This is the fundamental cause of the Russia-Ukraine war.

However, Western propaganda about "Russian imperialism" blinds many leftists to the realities of this conflict. The Ukraine war is ***not*** a just war of national liberation. The Ukrainian armed forces are directly controlled by NATO and subordinated to Western interests. But more than that, the national dimension of the conflict has ***two sides***. Yes, if Russia wins it will mean national oppression for Ukrainians. But if Ukraine wins, it is the millions of Russians living in Crimea, Eastern Ukraine and beyond who will be nationally oppressed. Neither outcome advances the working class.

Again, it is entirely false to place the U.S. and Russia on the same scale in terms of their role in world politics. The first has dominated the capitalist world since 1945, has hundreds of bases around the world, and continues to control all the main levers of imperialist finance capital. The second is a strong capitalist military power which has decisive weight in its immediate periphery. The first oppresses workers on a global scale, the second on a regional scale.

Fight the U.S. empire, unify the workers movement

The failure to identify the U.S. as the main support for the world imperialist order is the greatest source of disorientation and capitulation in the revolutionary movement. All the theories about inter-imperialist rivalries only serve to downplay and deny what everyone can see before their eyes: the U.S. is the main agent of chaos and misery in the world.

To recognize this does not mean becoming a vulgar campist, embracing any force that stands up to the U.S. No. We must oppose precisely the likes of Putin, Khamenei and Xi because the oppression of their own people and nationalist strategies ***undermine the fight*** against U.S. global tyranny.

The task of communists at this historic juncture is clear. ***We must build an internationalist proletarian pole against the downward spiral in which U.S. imperialism is dragging human civilization.*** Only from this strategic starting point can we begin to untangle the complex knots of regional and national conflicts and unite the working class. Only from this starting point can we forge a true, revolutionary working-class party. ■

Iran war

Save Trotskyism from the Trotskyists!

Wikimedia

Leon Trotsky, 1924.

As the US and Israel lay waste to Iran, it's obvious to a lot of people around the world where to stand. Not for most Trotskyist tendencies, though. Among leftists who won't take a straightforward position in defence of Iran against imperialism, Trotskyists are overrepresented.

They turn up at protests with placards calling: "No to war" and "Hands off Iran". They denounce war in general, imperialism and oppression. They publish articles of abstract geopolitical analysis that include every point under the sun. Except that there's a side to be had in this conflict: for the defeat of imperialism. If they mention that, it'll be buried on page 9 of a nine-page article.

This isn't what Trotskyism is supposed to be. If you judge by what Trotsky himself stood for, Trotskyists should be the most consistent anti-imperialists. As Trotsky explained, defending Lenin:

> "To him, the interests of the world proletariat dictated the duty of aiding oppressed peoples in their national and patriotic struggle against imperialism. Those who have not yet understood that, almost a quarter of a century after the World War and twenty years after the October revolution, must be pitilessly rejected as the worst enemies on the inside by the revolutionary vanguard."
>
> —"On the Sino-Japanese War", September 1937

Most Trotskyists today, however, take the opposite approach. For them, it's important to swim with the stream of petty-bourgeois public opinion, and especially to avoid rubbing the trade union officials the wrong way. So they capitulate to imperialism. There needs to be a struggle inside the Trotskyist movement for the defence of Iran against imperialism in order to build a revolutionary opposition to the imperialist ruling class, and to rescue the reputation of Trotskyism.

Strikes and strike-breaking

Many Trotskyist groups outright reject the defence of Iran, equally opposing the US waging war to subjugate Iran and Iran fighting against subjugation. The Alliance for Workers' Liberty, the Socialist Party of England and Wales (SP) and Socialist Alternative (SA) all share this scandalous neutrality between oppressed and oppressor.

Their main justification is the reactionary character of the Iranian government. It's true that the Shia theocracy is a hated oppressor of women and national and religious minorities, which slaughtered thousands of protesters in January. But to criticise the regime without defending the country against the imperialists who are devastating it is completely social-chauvinist.

Take the example of a strike. Most strikes are led by union bureaucrats who make a profession of maintaining class peace. But when these bureaucrats are forced to call a strike, it is necessary to support the struggle despite its leadership. Anyone refusing to do this because the leadership is in the hands of bureaucrats would rightly be branded a strikebreaker. And any socialist tendency producing long analytical articles about the strike, denouncing the leadership and obscuring the fact that there was a side to take in the struggle, would rightly be reviled by the strikers.

As Trotsky explained, the struggles of oppressed nations against imperialism are doubly progressive because on one side they create more favourable conditions for national development, and on the other they deal blows to imperialism. For that reason, he insisted: "In the struggle between a civilized, imperialist, democratic republic and a backward, barbaric monarchy in a colonial country, the socialists are completely on the side of the oppressed country notwithstanding its monarchy and against the oppressor country notwithstanding its 'democracy'" ("Lenin on imperialism", February 1939).

The Iranian regime's political authority comes in large part from its posture as the defender of the country against imperialism. To win the allegiance of the masses of the Middle East, it is necessary to show in practice that it is Trotskyists who are the best fighters against imperialism. Trotskyists in the West who renege on the defence of Iran cede the terrain to the mullahs. And they discredit Trotskyism in the countries that are oppressed by imperialism.

The SP calls for "unity of the working people of the Middle East and internationally in a struggle against our common enemies". But there is only one way to unite the working people in the Middle East with those in the imperialist countries whose rulers are devastating and enslaving the region. The workers movement in the imperialist oppressor countries must actively fight for the defeat of their own rulers.

Ghazzal/Cover Images

London, 7 March: Liberal pacifism dominates anti-war protest.

The implications of opposing both sides in the war can be seen concretely in SA's call: "Workers across the Middle East should coordinate strike action against the war. A regional general strike should be prepared" (internationalsocialist.net, 4 March). This perspective is one thing for Saudi Arabia and Egypt, whose governments are abetting the US-Zionist onslaught, or in the UK. It is quite another in Iran.

What would a general strike against the war in Iran look like? It would actively stop the production, transportation and delivery of the drones and missiles used to defend the country against attack. It would directly assist the US and Israel in pounding the country into rubble. This is a totally reactionary position.

Workers Hammer

Spartacists at 7 March protest call to defend Iran.

Pacifism disarms the movement

The answer to the war in Iran for the Socialist Workers Party and most Trotskyist tendencies is to build an anti-war movement together with the liberals, left Labour MPs and trade union officials. Since these elements oppose the war on a pacifist basis, pacifism dominates the Trotskyist tendencies, too. In its paper, the SWP accepts that Iran has the right to defend itself. But the SWP doesn't build the movement on that basis; it mobilises around pacifist calls to stop the war. Defending Iran is a red line for the British ruling class—you will never get a Labour MP on the platform if you organise on that basis.

The Labour government is assisting the American war in the name of peace and de-escalation. The pacifism of the left Labourites, the Greens and the trade union officialdom echoes this hypocrisy. Zack Polanski demands sanctions against Iran instead of bombing. The TUC condemned the attack by the US and Israel…and condemned Iran for defending itself. "Progressive" trade union officials petitioned Trump and Starmer to return to diplomatic talks, the whole purpose of which was to disarm Iran at the negotiating table. At bottom, they all agree that the imperialists should bring Iran to heel; they only differ on method.

Britain is assisting the US to protect the "special relationship", the fundamental basis for British imperialism's standing in the world. To stop British involvement in America's war will require the kind of action that threatens the ruling class's interests at home. Because they support the predatory aims of their own ruling class, these union leaders will never take the kind of action needed.

To mobilise the working class as a factor in the conflict, it is necessary to drive a wedge between workers and their leaders who, as Trotsky put it, serve capitalism "directly as a petty but active stockholder of its imperialist enterprises, of its plans and programs within the country as well as on the world arena" ("Trade unions in the epoch of imperialist decay", 1940). But the SWP and the SP sanitise the statements of the trade union bureaucrats, covering up their support for sanctions and their condemnation of Iran.

It is impossible to build an effective opposition to the war while remaining within the bounds of bourgeois respectability. This was the main lesson of the Palestine movement, which brought tens of thousands out to protest for almost two years. Despite the popularity of the cause and the commitment of its activists, the movement failed to stop the British government's support for Israeli genocide. What held the movement back? It was built to attract the support of Labour MPs, union officials and liberals. That meant it never went beyond what was acceptable to public opinion: bourgeois pacifism, human rights and international law. This ruled out all the most effective methods, like working-class actions to stop weapons shipments, and made the movement powerless.

The task of Trotskyists in this movement was to fight the leadership's pacifism and conciliation of the Labour government, to build an anti-imperialist pole. What did the SWP do? They repeated the same slogans as the rest of the movement, allowing it to stagnate and collapse. Having drawn no lessons, they are repeating the same mistakes in the Iran war.

Are you a Trotskyist?

In the Twelve Day War, the Revolutionary Communist Party took a correct stand in defence of Iran—but almost a week after the conflict was over. This time, when war broke out again, they started by taking a side. Good, this is a step forward. However, the most correct position in the world is meaningless unless you fight for it inside the left and workers movement.

But the RCP's position for the defence of Iran is buried in articles and isn't the basis for its intervention. In France, its comrades at least issued a polemic against leftists who don't stand for the defeat of imperialism. Not, however, here in Britain. Like the SP and the SWP, the RCP's main slogans on the war, "Hands off Iran" and "No to imperialist war", go with the flow of Labourite pacifism. This does nothing to challenge the hold of the pro-imperialist Labourites and union officials on the anti-war movement, which should be the whole point for Marxists.

The British RCP did publish a polemic, "The trade unions and the war on Iran" (communist.red, 12 March), which makes correct criticisms of the union leaders, despite its fatuous optimism about mass radicalisation of the British working class. But it doesn't even mention the need to take a side in the war. The "sharp turn in strategy and tactics" it advocates comes down to building a mass demonstration against the war and showing how this "links to the crisis of capitalism itself, which has done so much damage to our lives". Meanwhile, the unions are bankrolling Labour, which is in government assisting the American war effort.

What constitutes a revolutionary intervention is not denouncing capitalism or waving red flags but fighting to take opposition to the war out of the hands of those who support and conciliate imperialism.

* * *

US imperialism is on an offensive, raining death and destruction around the world in order to defend its rotting empire. The workers movement is tied by its leadership to the British imperialists, who support their American cousins because they depend on the US empire for their standing in the world. It is necessary to fight this influence to bring the workers movement to its feet against imperialist depredation abroad and at home. Instead, most Trotskyists are capitulating to British capital's lieutenants inside the workers movement.

Trotskyism cannot continue to be tarnished by such concessions to imperialism. We live in an epoch where this will cost dearly. A fight must be organised. ■

Palestine movement and state repression

For united defence

Organised by the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) and the Partisan Defence Committee, a webinar titled "Free Palestine! Fight state repression!" took place on 1 March, featuring a range of activists targeted for championing Palestinian liberation. Speakers included Momodou Taal, a PhD student at Cornell University in New York; Sarah of the SOAS 2 in London; Charlotte Kates of Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, which has been proscribed in Canada and elsewhere; Riverway to the Sea lawyer Frank Magennis; and a representative of the German-based Palestine on Trial. Below we print the speech by the PDC's comrade Kat.

PARTISAN DEFENCE COMMITTEE

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!

* * *

First off: our solidarity with the other presenters on this panel and your struggle for the cause of Palestinian freedom, often at great personal cost. To comrades not familiar with the Partisan Defence Committee, I'd like to introduce ourselves. The PDC was initiated by the Spartacist League/Britain in the late 1980s with the aim of uniting all forces willing to cooperate in the defence of those who are being persecuted for their activities carried out in the struggle for the class interests of workers and the oppressed. I'd like to motivate this perspective a bit today.

As we are all too aware, right-wing reaction is on the rise and Starmer's Labour Party is ratcheting up repression. The primary target of arrests in the recent period has been pro-Palestinian protesters, from the anti-Elbit activists to the RCP and comrades of the RCG as well as the various independent journalists and others who have also been targeted. They are among the many who have shown enormous courage and dedication to the cause of Palestinian liberation.

Yet we see that the left in particular clings to the old ways where each group mobilises mainly its own members, on its own turf and with its own methods, when they are being targeted. This is not a tenable strategy to effectively push back against the forces of repression and strengthen the workers movement.

We agree with many of the RCG's criticisms of this method, and we also agree with your perspective of appealing to broader forces in the face of the very serious charges your own comrades are facing. Today's discussion is a good example of working to overcome the deeply entrenched sectarianism of the left. While many of us are familiar with the slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all", it is not in reality how the struggle against repression is being conducted. With repression only set to increase and broaden, there is an urgent need for united-front campaigns as a step towards building a ***broader organisation*** for defence work that can spring into action no matter who is being targeted and that reaches across the workers movement and beyond political divisions.

But to build such a united-front organisation we have to confront head-on the sectarianism of the left. Our task is to take these criticisms into the socialist movement and build a pole that can break through the sectarianism by showing in action that we are stronger together in defence of our democratic rights than when we are fighting separately. This doesn't imply at all that we agree on every political question. But we must fight as one

THE LEFT IS FAILING LUCY LETBY

Workers Hammer

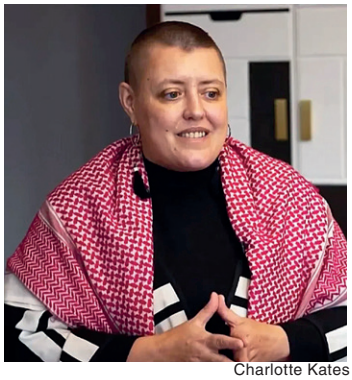
PDC-organised rally, Birmingham, 7 November 2025.

Nurse Lucy Letby's conviction on charges of murdering babies has now been widely discredited as a frame-up in the mainstream press. As evidence that she was scapegoated for the failures of the NHS is mounting, there has been a groundswell of support for her. But not among the socialist left. Far-left groups like the Socialist Party and the SWP say she's guilty. Outlets like Novara Media and commentators like Owen Jones have been virtually silent on what many describe as the worst miscarriage of justice this century. Why? Because Letby's case is unpopular among liberal and middle-class elements who believe in the justice system and dismiss frame-ups as conspiracy theories.

The fact that it is mainly the political right that has spoken up for Lucy Letby is a total indictment of the left and a scathing exposure of its blind faith in capitalist institutions. This ***must*** change. We urge socialists to come out publicly in support of Lucy Letby. Scan the QR code above for a *Workers Hammer* podcast which dives into this question in more detail.

against repression intended to weaken all of us.

I appreciate that today's speakers are contributing to this discussion from different international experiences. So, I'd like to speak to what's happening in Britain. Starmer's government has pursued a vicious campaign of repression against pro-Palestinian activists because opposing Israel's genocide of the Palestinians is a big red line for British imperialism. I think we all know this. But there are many people in this country who don't support the government's foreign policies, as shown by the hundreds of thousands who have taken to the street week after week, including many of us here.


Charlotte Kates

WSWS

Sarah

Left to right: Charlotte Kates, Samidoun. Momodou Taal, Cornell student activist. Sarah of SOAS 2.

But we must be honest with ourselves and recognise that these marches have not had a decisive impact on stopping the horrors. The main reason for this is that the leadership of the movement has sought to contain the politics of the protests to what is acceptable to the Labour Party and the establishment, hosting the likes of Diane Abbott, John McDonnell and other such dignitaries. When you unite with representatives of the government that is supporting Israel and jailing the ones who oppose the genocide, how can you then fight this repression!

Comrades in the RCG have rightly and, might I add, often quite effectively denounced the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Labour politicians for exactly this reason. What this means for us, then, is that building a broad defence organisation goes hand in hand with building a revolutionary pole against the liberal leadership in the Palestine movement. We have to do both things: fight for the broadest possible unity in action for defence work and provide an alternative strategy for the Palestine movement against its liberal leadership.

Lastly, we must fight for the workers movement to unite in action in defence of the victims of repression. But union leaders like Sharon Graham, Andrea Egan and Eddie Dempsey and many before them have overseen the hollowing out of the union movement. Working within the unions to mobilise for united-front defence in opposition to their leadership is a crucial aspect of strengthening the workers movement as a whole for the battles ahead, including against imperialism itself.

Such defence work has a long tradition in the workers movement, and we take our inspiration from the Comintern and the work of the American International Labor Defense (ILD). I'd like to end my remarks by quoting James P Cannon, one of the founders of the ILD, who in 1926 made the very simple yet powerful point that "The victory of the class-war prisoners is possible only when they are inseparably united with the living labor movement and when that movement claims them for its own, takes up their battle cry and carries on their work." ***Defend all pro-Palestinian activists! Free Palestine!*** Thank you, comrades. ■

Cuba: break the blockade!

Fundraising success!

As Trump ratchets up the embargo on Cuba leading to increased food scarcity, power outages and collapsing social services, the Cuban Revolution is in acute danger. To withstand this onslaught, the country needs massive material aid, now! Our international fundraising campaign, launched last month, rallied behind the urgent need for solidarity that goes beyond paper statements of support and raised over ***£19,000***. Donations poured in from supporters and sympathisers in the US, Mexico, Germany, France, Australia and beyond. We thank everyone who donated to ensure that we reached our goal.

As we go to press, we are pleased to announce that comrades representing the PDC will be joining the Nuestra América Convoy to Cuba in Havana on 21 March, bringing much needed material aid to the Cuban people. In addition, we will be distributing funds to organisations that are actively sending aid to Cuba. Among these is Cuba Vive, a British-based organisation launched two years ago by Unison North West and the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. They are sending crucial medical supplies like wheelchairs, blood transfusion sets and paediatric catheters as well as food. Another is Let Cuba Live!, a US-based campaign initiated by the Party for Socialism and Liberation, which is raising money to send solar panels and generators to Cuban hospitals. ***Defend Cuba against US imperialism!*** ■

Donate to the Partisan Defence Committee!

Send donations to: Partisan Defence Committee Sort code 20-10-53, Account no 60521507

Phone: 07438 878 627 ◆ Email: contact@partisandefence.org.uk 𝕏@PDCBritain ◆ @partisandefencecommittee

A challenge to RMT

Organise the unorganised

At the risk of sounding like a bad joke: How many workers does it take to maintain the railways? Nobody knows. From the Tories' privatisation of the national rail system to Labour's privatisation of the London Tube, the goal was to bring down wages and weaken the unions, and it worked. The railway system is now a patchwork of public and private operations with dozens of contractors and subcontractors lording over everything from full-time employees to tens of thousands of workers on zero-hour contracts or considered self-employed contractors. Wages and conditions, once negotiated nationally with a single employer, now vary massively among regions. And that is just for those lucky enough to still be directly employed and in a union at all. For the tens of thousands on tenuous contracts or "self-employed", it's back to Victorian times, only then the trains and tracks were new.

Stewart/Shutterstock

Most rail workers are subcontractors with lousy conditions, no union protection.

The response of the RMT to this state of affairs has been to urge successive governments to re-nationalise, go after subcontractors and ease anti-union laws to make it easier for them to organise. The problem is that for the City of London, whom Tories and Labour both serve, putting unions like the RMT on their knees was exactly the point. They will not be convinced to reverse course by fine arguments; they must be forced by hard class battle. Carrying that out will require industry-wide struggle, which must be prepared by industry-wide organising. That is exactly what the RMT is not doing.

Going off the rails

Rightfully, at the heart of the RMT's arguments for nationalisation have been workers' rights, public safety and re-industrialisation. In a policy paper to the government last year, they noted: "These employment conditions are obviously bad for workers but they are also bad for service quality and safety. Outsourcing companies create profits by driving down on staff costs, cutting jobs and pressuring workers to cut corners." They cite numerous examples of rail accidents—many fatal or nearly so—and investigations linking them to the chaos of outsourcing.

In another study from last year, the RMT note how bringing back national production of trains and replacement track would help revive the steel and manufacturing industries. This is absolutely true—a big part of deindustrialisation was the privatisation of rail.

Subcontracting is a shadowy world and real numbers are hard to find, but in 2013 the RMT noted: "Of some 88,000 PTS cardholders [those licensed to do rail maintenance], 67,000 are not directly employed by Network Rail. RMT believes that less than 10% are full-time employed and that the remainder may well be working under bogus self-employment on zero-hours contracts." Things have likely only got worse since then. This is a massive pool of unorganised workers. There have been attempts to organise small pockets of these workers here and there, but no serious push to unionise the whole field of subcontracted labour.

A rose by any other name...is still full of pricks

The question then is what has the RMT proposed to end these horrific conditions? Well, of course, government intervention, by yes, governments of the exact same parties that imposed privatisation precisely to break the union.

This is central to how the RMT leadership views building the union. Excited by the creation of Great British Railways (GBR), they write in one 2025 paper: "GBR could also undertake joint work with the unions to create job security and a framework within which future workforce and training needs can be identified".

The creation of GBR was never about bettering workers' conditions or growing the unions. It is the state intervening to bail out failing private operators and partially address the chaos of transport, which is becoming too widespread to ignore. This is essentially what already happened with London Underground.

In the Tube, the cost overruns of the private companies and chaos on the tracks were too great to bear in the political and economic capital of the country. But what followed was not renationalisation. It was the rail lines coming back under public oversight and ownership. Crucially, the trains remain privately built and rail maintenance is still carried out largely by private contractors and subcontractors. The RMT's own position papers admit this is what is planned with GBR.

GBR is not a return to the public ownership of the past. When rail was nationalised in 1947, it was one of the measures to shore up declining British imperialism at home as the empire crumbled abroad. At that time, the ruling class also faced an insurgent working class and needed to buy class peace. That is fundamentally not the case now.

You could say that the union's strategy has it backwards. The unions will not be built by some gift of nationalisation. Rather, only building the unions and confronting the government will be able to force such concessions.

We can't play by the bosses' rules

But treating the government (particularly Labour) as a partner rather than the enemy is how all union leaders, including the RMT's, view organising. The basic idea is that by law, if

the union meets the legal threshold, then the company has to recognise the union. So it's just a matter of gradually convincing individuals to be a member and then, presto, you have a union. Of course, things are never this simple.

In the first place, the government places all sorts of restrictions on the union's efforts, such as anti-union laws. One thing we've heard from RMT members is their officials saying that the current government will change the laws, making it easier to organise. Not only is this not very likely from the same Labour Party working to crush the Birmingham bin strike, but it ties the unions' hands behind their backs. Seeking to put the government on your side means not upsetting them, playing by their rules, no matter how rigged.

Secondly, the bosses have a thousand ways to crush organising, even when they do play by the rules (which they rarely do). The entire system of subcontracting is set up to do just this. Breaking up the workforce into dozens of supposedly independent companies makes gaining union recognition of the majority of workers by normal means nearly impossible. Creating smaller and isolated groups of workers makes it easier for the bosses to simply fire anyone they see as a troublemaker (or just stop hiring those supposedly "self-employed"). In fact, there have been efforts among these workers to organise themselves that have been smashed in just this way.

Piecemeal methods cannot work in this environment. Underground organising and strikes demanding a betterment for every rail worker are the only way to bring in the whole of the rail workforce. The situation calls for organising class war on the rails.

But the RMT has barely done anything to organise subcontractors, even by the piecemeal approach. When they do, they take a worker who volunteers to join and set up a unit where a few workers join, hoping to meet the legal threshold. Then, outside, they lobby the government to renationalise rail, hoping it will help organise the workers. The whole point of their latest position papers is to convince Keir Starmer's broke and hated Labour government to finally do this with GBR. Simply put, the RMT is playing by the bosses' rules, which not only guarantees failure but also threatens the union's survival.

A castle on a sandbar

The selling off of rail, along with the general deindustrialisation of the country, was a massacre of the working class of Britain. RMT members, especially those in bastions like the London Tube, are seen as a ***relatively*** privileged sector. Many members of other unions look at the pay and benefits (like public pensions) that some RMT members have held onto as a sign of what a strong union can achieve. But many also see them as living the high life at the public's expense, especially compared to the conditions of the rest of the working class. The ruling class sees them as a central target, a vestige of public sector unionism to be destroyed.

All of this played out in last year's Tube strike. The capitalist press was able to undercut public support for the strike by attacking the union's demand for shorter work hours. As justified as the union's demands were, many workers are working overtime just to survive. Rather than being seen as fighting for the betterment of all workers, they were seen as fighting for the privilege of a few. This problem will present itself again in the new, upcoming round of strikes the RMT has announced in the Tube.

This is also clear in the various "in-housing" campaigns of the union. These are not built as industrial action drives, but as PR campaigns to convince MPs, and they have focused almost exclusively on workforces already organised by the RMT, like caterers and cleaners. For major sections of outsourced workers, like rail repair, these campaigns have little or no meaning. They are neither a real challenge to outsourcing nor a promise of improvement of these workers' conditions, and the union has made no effort to even talk to them and get them involved.

And the fact of the matter is that all of this has hurt RMT members. Even in strongholds like the Tube, their pay, benefits and conditions have all fallen in the decades since privatisation. Up to 300 unionised Tube workers are currently facing possible deportation as part of the government's anti-immigration drive. This is an outrage which points to the urgent need for industrial action. Instead, the RMT has a protest every couple of months.

Morning Star

Enough PR. We need industrial action.

The RMT is now a castle surrounded by a sea of degraded labour. The ground around that castle is what's left of organised labour and is being eroded every day. If this ground is not shored up and expanded, the walls of your citadel will eventually collapse.

Convince the workers, not the bosses

To quote RMT head Eddie Dempsey: "I hate to say this: People aren't paid according to what social value they bring to society. If they were, you wouldn't see nurses going to food banks. Your wages depend on the strength of the union and your preparedness to take militant strike action." We could not agree more. But the RMT is not taking this class struggle approach to the vast majority of rail workers. To change course is all the more necessary against the system of privatisation, which is not a matter of this or that contract, but a multi-generational scheme of the City of London to destroy the living standards of the whole working class.

For the RMT to combat this, there needs to be a struggle to organise every worker on the railways, regardless of employer (or, for that matter, "self-employed"), and put union resources into it. The union has already made many of the arguments for the advantage of being in a union, but they need to be made to these workers, not the government.

To do this will mean a sustained campaign of both inside and outside work. On the one hand, the union must dedicate resources and organisers to reach out to subcontracted workers. On the other hand, it must become part of these workforces. There is hiring and training going on now for these jobs. Put your members in! This is a task for the socialist left as well. Many youth are joining apprenticeships instead of uni, get your members into them and help to build the union.

This won't be easy work, the jobs themselves are hard and the employers hate unions. This is exactly why the RMT's resources, skilled organisers and the money to back them up are so needed to accomplish it.

But the precondition for this must be a fight within the RMT against its current strategy. So long as the leadership of the RMT continues to rely on the government and on the bosses' rules, the union will go nowhere.

To RMT members, we say: fight with your leaders to take a new course, and if they will not, get leaders who will. The fight to turn this country around isn't going to start in Westminster, it is going to start on the job site! ■

Youth need a future, not a social media ban

Scarff/Getty

by Tom G

Since banning porn with the Online Safety Act (see *Workers Hammer* no 256, Autumn 2025), the liberals have now turned their attention to social media. Although the initial plan introduced by the "Lords" to implement an Australia-style total ban on social media for under 16s has been blocked for now, a swarm of Tory, Liberal Democrat and Labour MPs, as well as trade union leaders and washed-up celebs, are still pushing for it. The Labour government itself has not ruled it out completely, instead stalling for a "consultation period". Finished with fleecing the disabled, the now Science Secretary (whatever that is) Liz Kendall has been given powers to "restrict or ban children of certain ages from accessing social media services and chat bots". This is a heated topic for parents and to chart a way forward for youth, the question must be put on the right terrain.

We should start by being frank: social media can be harmful. Kids glued to their phones, "doom scrolling" instead of being interactive and present in the real world, is not progressive. Boys only having to be on social media for 30 minutes before Andrew Tate pops up is not a good thing. And the obsession over how many "likes" and "comments" for meaningless posts and cringe selfies is further degrading the mental health of generations suicide watch, AKA Gens Z and Alpha.

Never mind the pro-genocide and anti-worker parliamentarians for a moment; the many parents who support this ban do it out of the sincere love and fierce protection they have for their kids. Most parents want their young to have a life that is as carefree as possible so that they can focus on the things that matter at that age, ie, making friends, learning new things, etc, to lay the groundwork for a stable and happy adult life. But here lies the first problem. This is, unfortunately, an impossible illusion in today's Broken Britain.

Schools are a crumbling and cramped mess: underfunded, overfilled, understaffed, with teachers past the point of burnout. But economic restraint is only half the problem. Every turbulent social issue in society is brought to school, with the school boards only having liberal nonsense as a response, leaving teachers defenceless against the brewing storm of reaction (see page 18). As for students, just making it through the day is getting more impossible in this environment, not even speaking of the huge pressure they face to get decent grades.

Look beyond the awful walls of school and what is there for youth? Well, not much. Future good job prospects are non-existent, wars are breaking out around the globe and social relations between people are just as broken as the country itself. It is a sad state of affairs; kids can't just put that to the side and delude themselves with a comfortable world that doesn't exist. Social media is the "natural" place to turn for an escape, a distraction, whatever you want to call

LETTER FROM A UNISON REP

Repping against rot

I'd dance a jig with any Unison member to the defeat of Starmerite Christina McAnea in the union's general secretary election. And it's a delight she was beaten by a candidate expelled from Labour for sharing a Marxist group's article on social media and who ran on taking a social worker's pay, rather than the bosses' salary awarded to McAnea as members' wages plummeted in real terms and layoffs abounded.

But let's get real. Andrea Egan was elected leader of Unison on a ***seven*** per cent turnout. This was mostly the organised left animated by her candidacy. This shows: 1. Egan was not seen by the mass of members as a change to strengthen the union. 2. How divorced socialist groups are from the union membership.

How could the election of Egan begin to lift the union off its knees? She couldn't even run on the minimum that's required and happens to be the most popular position in the country: forthright opposition to *Sir* Keir Starmer's Labour Party. Egan's rallying cries were "members first, Labour Party second" and getting "value for money" for Unison's 16 per cent of members who can stomach paying into the Labour link. Getting "value" from a government pillaging the population?!

Those of us who are Unison reps knowing we desperately need to strengthen the union, work our backsides off. Whether it's organising and integrating the most marginalised sections of the class into our branch, or fighting every angle against the bosses in defence of our members, you won't hear me complaining about our necessary (though exhausting) tasks.

What's maddening are the layers of rot, ***within the union***, that have to be chipped away to do the day-to-day work of fighting for our members against the bosses. Having to constantly struggle against the branch bureaucracy before you can use the union's leverage to defeat speed-ups. Or establish a branch position that making it harder and costlier for the employer to penalise staff is ***worthwhile***. Or to fight for the perspective that our strength lies in collective action which must be amplified by real (not token) coordination with the other trade unions in the workplace. Or even to make the basic point for independence from the bosses—that members who have been promoted to senior management no longer have a place in the union and should be kept out of our business.

The fish rots from the head. The class collaboration that stifles the union's fight at branch level flows from the union tops' complicity with a Labour government ruling for the City of London bankers.

During the general secretary election, I told my branch reps supporting Egan I would be her most energetic campaigner if she gets off the fence and runs for breaking with Labour. Socialist groups could have used what influence they have to do similar and to connect with the mass of the membership. Many members would probably have been more interested in a campaign to break their union from the most hated man in the country. This was a missed opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of socialists in strengthening the union. ■

it, in this terrible, rotting society. An effective ban on social media will only make youth turn to darker corners of the web to get their fix.

Here is the second problem: whilst social media offers an escape, it is still a reflection of society. If kids want to drown in an online world, it is because they are desperately trying to hide from a real world that sucks. If boys cannot go 30 minutes without seeing Andrew Tate, it is because he resonates with the anger felt in their lives. If insecurity over "likes" and "comments" dominates the priorities of a young person, it is because their real life is so void of genuine meaning. Tackling the very real addiction, harmful content and draining of mental health that social media creates requires a fight against the society we live in. Anything else not only stops short but undermines that struggle.

Why is this? Young people are curious, confused and vulnerable beings. They have not socialised properly yet, they are interpreting and learning to understand the world in a way that is aspirational but also primitive and dependent on adults. More precisely, they are developing their independence whilst materially still being dependent on their parents, stuck in the dreadful crisis society is in. This is the contradiction with youth and social media. On the one hand, social media offers an idealistic aspiration of independence; a world without your parents and adult expectations. You can be a freer expression of yourself and explore interests not accessible elsewhere. On the other hand, everything created in this world still flows from the real world and intensifies all its ills—isolation, hopelessness and depravity.

This is necessary to understand. Society today works as an obstacle to youth freedom, and no one has any real answers. Obviously, youth will cling to any kind of shortcut that gives them a space where they can feel like they are achieving their aims to some degree, even if it is a fantasy. To push youth forward, we must win them to fight for a society that is better. Blocking them from social media is only cutting them off from a tiny window into their aspirations.

Now, back to those genocide-loving and working-class-hating parliamentarians. Here lies problem three: all they have ever done and continue to do is wreck this country even more. The social media ban is an attempt to plaster over a gouging wound. We need to rebuild industry, build homes, strip bare the City of London and empower the working class to create the conditions where youth can prosper. This is everything they are opposed to and ultimately why life is so dire for young people. Independence from these swine means everything in the fight for youth. ■

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How to fight misogyny in schools

By a London teacher

In December 2025 the Labour government declared violence against women and girls a "national emergency", committing to halving it in a decade by using "the full power of the state". The numbers are truly disturbing. According to the Office of National Statistics, instances of domestic abuse, which disproportionately affects women, more than doubled in England and Wales, going from 410,572 in 2016 to 889,918 in 2023. The reported instances of rape have shot up from 13,272 in March 2004 to 71,540 in March 2025. If we abide by the famous aphorism that the status of women is a measure of the progress of society, then Britain is most certainly going backwards.

But if the Labour government thinks that some symbolic declarations and posturing as a champion of women and girls will make us forget that its own cops rape and murder women (we haven't forgotten about Sarah Everard), that it supports the genocide of Palestinians, with women and children slaughtered in the tens of thousands, or that it cuts benefits for the most marginalised, or that it constantly gets on its knees for the misogynist-in-chief across the pond, then it has another thing coming. It is precisely because violence against women and girls is a burning problem that we need a ***real strategy*** to fight it! The conditions for women and girls will advance only if Broken Britain gets fixed.

Alecu/Alamy

Government's liberal campaign won't stem Andrew Tate's anti-woman bigotry.

Schools on the frontline

The growth of violence against women is happening in the context of the documented rise in misogyny among boys and young men, a reflection of the proliferation of the manosphere. Misogyny has become a mainstream topic since the release of *Adolescence* last year and Louis Theroux's *Inside the manosphere* this year. Both, whatever their flaws, put the spotlight on a real and growing problem: a wholesale social crisis facing young people and unfolding along gender lines.

Schools are a natural frontline of this crisis since this is where young people spend most of their time. Teachers report a rise in misogynistic comments and attitudes; many schools have done whole-school boys-only assemblies on Andrew Tate and the manosphere (because…of their chromosomes?); and more days are rolled out to train teachers in how to spot the signs of misogyny, how to talk to boys, how to talk about masculinity, and all sorts. (As if we didn't have enough reasons to quit the profession!)

Because schools are a major interface between youth and society, it is no surprise that they form a key component of the government's strategy to deal with misogyny, and that the National Education Union (NEU) has its own campaign on the issue. To say that both are hugely ill-equipped to deal with the issue would be an understatement.

The liberal tautology

What exactly are the solutions on offer? The government wants to "empower" teachers and families to "address these harmful attitudes and behaviours", teach young boys how to "identify positive role models and challenge unhealthy myths about women and relationships", "arm children against disinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories", place children "displaying harmful behaviours…in behaviour change programmes" (!) and give police (unfortunately) and social services more "tools they need to intervene".

The NEU, for its part, does not put forward anything fundamentally different. "It's Not OK"—its campaign against sexism and sexual harassment—is a toolkit for educating young boys about healthy masculinity, how to challenge gender stereotypes, and how to make collages about masculinity or facilitate a session on body sculpting. (Don't worry, we are as confused as you are.)

Sounds good though, right?

Wrong. Both the NEU and the government view everything in terms of "teaching" misogyny out of the heads of boys. (The difference is that the government is willing to throw the "bad ones" into behaviour change programmes.) And as far

as where that behaviour comes from, both agree that it's due to bad influences, exacerbated by social media.

We are left with a tautology: bad ideas (of the manosphere) are causing bad ideas (in the heads of boys). And, we will get good behaviour by modelling good behaviour. Simple, as if kids were lab monkeys. This logic perhaps explains why the government only pledged a measly £20 million for its solution, and why the union demands nothing and instead suggests nice charities which can come in to give workshops.

Epicscotland.com/Alamy

Housing estate in Maryhill, Glasgow. One in three children in Britain grows up in poverty.

Let's get real for a minute

A lot of education workers would welcome much of what is on offer. Partly because so little is done to deal with these problems, we're happy something is being done at all, and partly because we stay true to our vocation and genuinely think everything can improve through education. But the efficacy of these solutions must be judged by looking at the broader social and political context and with a clear understanding of what exactly is driving the growth of misogynistic attitudes.

Let's start with the broader context. The education system is crumbling from chronic underfunding. Academy trusts leech off school funding to pay their CEOs to turn schools into prisons. They implement completely draconian behaviour management regimes which are designed to instil submission but in fact breed defiance. Learning needs are through the roof, but there's not enough funding for Teaching Assistants. The number of students eligible for free school meals, meaning those from low-income families, continues to rise year on year, sitting at 25% of all students as of 2025. A lot of students in inner-city schools don't even have paper at home on which to do their homework!

Schools are simply not fit for purpose. As youth experience more hardship, school budgets are being slashed. They are not places where young people thrive. In fact, despite teachers working themselves to the bone, the education system is failing the majority of young people. Youth have few prospects after they finish school—good jobs are few and far between in Britain's stagnant economy. Youth crime is on the rise. On top of all this, going to university to stand a chance traps them in lifelong debt. The growth of misogynistic attitudes is taking place in the context of an entire society rotting from within. Youth in particular experience the brunt of it. And of course, it's the children of the working class who get it the worst.

The problem of misogyny is also inseparable from the rightward shift in politics nationally and internationally. It's no coincidence that the popularity of Andrew Tate parallels that of Reform UK and Tommy Robinson here. Or that the manosphere played a major role in getting Trump re-elected in the US, with harebrained bigots like Sneako attending the inauguration of the president of the most powerful country on the planet.

In this context, teaching "good ideas" and spreading "good vibes" in isolation from the crumbling education system, the rightward shift and the general decay of society is a ***complete non-starter***. No amount of good role models at school is enough to pull huge layers of youth out of the social and economic rot which surrounds them. For all the workshops teaching boys how harmful anti-woman ideas are, they leave school and go right out into society where everything we are trying to unteach them is reinforced.

This vicious cycle won't be broken by ideas alone. If teachers could change the world through just teaching, we would have done so by now. We are dealing with a deep-going social problem. To moralise at young and often defiant boys without going to the root of the problem will not work. In fact, it will very likely backfire and push them further into the arms of the very reactionaries who grow their clout by rejecting the do-gooder vibes the government and the union are pushing. We cannot win this battle if we keep using tools which are clearly broken. To save boys from the manosphere, something will need to give.

Why so much misogyny?

Before we proceed to what that is, we need to take up social media, the culprit everyone loves to blame for all the ills of youth. Yes, social media has made it easier for red-pill content to proliferate amongst young boys. But young boys are not idiots who will believe anything they are told.

There is a reason why such content strikes a chord with them, why it's popular, and why it pulls them deeper into the manosphere. It's because their social and material circumstances are driving them to look for a "red pill" for something which explains why everything is stacked against them—from detentions every day to poor grades, terrible school dinners, pressures around dating and being liked, disappearing social spaces, neglect, family problems, an overcrowded flat, lack of privacy, impending social media bans and a whole host of other things.

They are looking for an escape, for a quick way out. (Ever wonder why young boys from nice liberal middle-class homes are usually not the types who like the manosphere, but it's the ones from the estates?) So, when bigots like HSTikkyTokky talk about "the system" and "the colluding powers at the top of the world that want to keep everyone down, keep everyone broke, keep the slave mindset going"—this rings true for them. Hell, he's right! The problem is that this one piece of truth gets laced with misogyny, chauvinism, anti-Semitism and scam trading schemes which give these reactionaries their millions.

With everything working against them and nothing to pull them back, young boys get sucked deeper into the manosphere pipeline, ultimately buying into the poisonous misogyny which tells them that their masculinity rests on the submission and humiliation of girls and women. It can go from inane things like rage-baiting teachers for banter during lessons to using homophobic and transphobic slurs against others to assert their own manliness, to upskirting and sharing nudes because for them, girls become mere playthings.

To blame social media for the growth of misogyny is not

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NHHC/Wikimedia

Torok/White House

US power is the foundation of Gulf monarchies. Left: Egypt, 1945, US President Roosevelt meets Saudi king Ibn Saud. Right: Trump meets Crown Prince Bin Salman, Riyadh, May 2025.

Don't underestimate...

(continued from page 5)

this does not guarantee that the same course will be followed once more, it should at the very least give pause to those who proclaim with certainty that Iran will fight until victory.

How to throw the U.S. out of the Middle East

Another common view is that the U.S. may be expelled from the Middle East because of this conflict. How is this expected to happen? The basic outline can be seen in the declaration by Mojtaba Khamenei:

> "I advise the leaders of regional countries to shut down those [U.S.] bases as soon as possible, for they must surely have realized by now that the U.S.'s claims of ensuring security and peace have been nothing but lies. Shutting down U.S. bases in the region will enable those governments to strengthen their ties with their own people, who are generally dissatisfied with the humiliating behavior associated with those bases."

No doubt there is discontent in the Gulf countries at having been dragged into this war and seeing their infrastructure becoming targets. But to think that this would be enough for them to break their military ties with the U.S. is a total fantasy. U.S. military power is the very foundation on which the Gulf monarchies have maintained themselves as dystopian islands of feudal reaction.

The only way to throw the U.S. out of the Gulf is to throw the kings, sheikhs, emirs and princes out with them. This would have to be done through popular mobilization, which would have to extend to the vast layers of laboring immigrants who make these countries run. As the declaration above shows, this is not at all the perspective of the Iranian regime. It seeks to appeal to the very rulers dependent on and heavily invested in the U.S. to do the right thing and close the bases.

Even if Iran somehow exerted enough pressure for American bases to be closed, what then? Would the fanatic Sunni regimes in the Gulf accept living in harmony with a Shia republic armed with long-range ballistic missiles and the potential to acquire nuclear weapons? Never. The truth is that despite their protests, the Sunni monarchies are just as invested as Israel in breaking the Islamic Republic and removing it as a rival.

This points to the most important obstacle to throwing the U.S. out of the Middle East: the countless sectarian and national divisions that split the region. These tensions, consciously fostered by the imperialists, mean that there is always a group willing to make a pact with the devil and lean on an outside power to further its own narrow interests. As long as there isn't a way to cut through these divisions and unite the peoples of West Asia in a common struggle against the foreign oppressors, there will be no prospect of expelling imperialism from the region, which will continue to be dragged downward in an infernal cycle of wars.

An anti-imperialist strategy

What does an anti-imperialist strategy look like in the current war? It must start with a clear stance in defense of Iran. ***Unity against imperialism is the precondition for any progressive outcome.***

This does not imply support for the rulers of the Islamic Republic. Starting from the standpoint of defending the country, it is necessary to show how the IRGC's strategy and policies undermine this fight.

- The religious-dictatorial character of the regime, not least its imposition of the veil and other anti-woman policies, alienates large layers of the population.
- The oppression of national minorities creates potential recruits for the imperialists and Zionists—better to give them self-determination and build a strong alliance on a fraternal basis.
- The corrupt elite undermines economic development and the ability of Iran to resist.

We must show that to repel imperialist aggression and develop the country, ***Iran needs a different regime—one based on the power of the working class and the oppressed masses***.

Given the deep sectarian divisions in Iran and in the broader region, religion cannot be the basis for unity. Neither can bureaucratically imposed secularism. ***Only by guaranteeing the religious and national rights of every minority can we start to overcome the deep animosity that exists.*** Ultimately, it is in a common struggle against foreign aggression that we will be able to bind all these various groups together.

In the broader Muslim world and Global South, we must not have any faith that the current leaders will be consistent in their opposition to the U.S. Most have a direct interest in maintaining the status quo. At every step they dither and conciliate. ***We must appeal to the masses of the Global South to oppose the subservient policies of their governments.***

In Israel as well as the U.S. and other imperialist countries, the bastions of world reaction, we must fight to polarize society along class lines. No faith whatsoever can be placed in the "more democratic" wings of the ruling class. ***To win the working class of the "collective West," we must show it how the disastrous foreign policy of the elites only creates chaos and misery at home.*** The working class does not in any way have an interest in being dragged down by its rulers in a spiral of global destruction.

If we are clear that this is where humanity is heading, it should also be clear that half-measures and pious wishes that the empire will crumble from within will not do. We have no time to lose in regrouping the most consistent and determined elements of the anti-imperialist movement around a clear conception and strategy. ■

US imperialism strikes again

Defend Venezuela! Release Maduro!

The following statement was issued as a Spartacist *supplement on 3 January.*

The U.S. has launched a major military operation against Venezuela, with multiple bombings of key military and civilian sites, which has—according to warmonger-in-chief Donald Trump—led to the capture of Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores.

This is the culmination of a months-long build-up of U.S. forces in the Caribbean for a clear goal: the overthrow of the Venezuelan government and its replacement by a pro-U.S. puppet, in order to open the vast oil resources of the country for pillage and reassert U.S. control of all of Latin America.

Workers and oppressed peoples across the globe must take a clear side: ***With Venezuela against U.S. imperialist aggression! Release Maduro now!***

The Venezuelan people must resist U.S. imperialist aggression by any means necessary. Whatever one's opinion of the Maduro regime, its overthrow at the hands of the U.S. is an attack against all workers and peasants of Latin America and the whole Global South.

Calls for UN intervention and for upholding "international law" are a useless waste of time. This aggression is only the first step of a broader offensive whose aim is to crush any resistance to American domination in the continent. What is needed is an ***anti-U.S. front throughout Latin America***, including urgent military assistance to Venezuela. The People's Republic of China has a particular responsibility here and could play a major role in supplying weapons and putting tremendous economic pressure on the U.S.

The international working class, including U.S. workers, can and must join the resistance against U.S. designs. ***Demonstrate, strike wherever possible against U.S. imperialism and its partners in crime!*** Any blow to U.S. interests would give much-needed assistance to the Venezuelan resistance.

This latest aggression shows once more that the main agent of chaos and war internationally is American imperialism. As U.S. missiles rain down on Caracas, those who think China and Russia pose the same threat as the U.S. need to wake up. The unity of workers and oppressed peoples can only be built by opposing their main enemy: the U.S. imperialist hegemon. ***All with Venezuela! Down with U.S. imperialism!*** ■

China: Defend Venezuela! Resist America!

The following article was issued as a Spartacist *supplement on 9 January.*

Trump's naked imperialist aggression in Venezuela is a staggering blow, not only to the masses of Latin America and the Global South but to the People's Republic of China as well. The U.S. pirates are seizing oil supplies mainly bound for China and demanding the ouster of Chinese, Russian, Cuban and Iranian advisers from Venezuela. And what is the response of the Communist Party of China (CPC)? Nothing but speeches about "international law" and pledges to maintain their economic ties, just like they did nothing to stop the Gaza genocide.

The more the CPC acts like a paper tiger, the more this encourages the depredations of the U.S. as it tries to prop up its crumbling hegemony. Toppling Maduro was a stepping stone for its plans to sink the Cuban Revolution and force Iran and other recalcitrant regimes into submission. All this is to prepare the ground for confronting the People's Republic head-on.

The empty words from the BRICS+ chastising Trump show once again their prostration before the U.S. What's needed instead is a united anti-imperialist front based on the world's workers and oppressed peoples. The Chinese people did not secure their liberation through United Nations resolutions or "win-win" negotiations but through bitter struggle against imperialism. China has the power to lead such a fight now. But its leaders resist this course because they embrace all the bankrupt institutions of the dying liberal world order. It's high time to change course!

- China used its economic muscle to push back against Trump's tariffs. Today, if it stops rare earths from reaching U.S. shores, it could force Trump to release Maduro and make him think twice before his next rampage.
- China sits on trillions in foreign reserves. It should send a good chunk to Cuba, along with engineers to help rebuild its infrastructure.
- China has built up massive military power to defend the mainland against Japanese and U.S. aggression. Good! Now use it to resist the imperialists in the Caribbean and the Persian Gulf! This would not be an "imperialist" move but a way to protect the world from the real imperialists.

There is a lot of silly talk in China that the humiliation of Maduro shows how the PLA could swoop into Taiwan and seize President Lai Ching-te. This bombast is just a way to save face after China's utter capitulation. In fact, the quick U.S. victory in Venezuela will strengthen U.S. encirclement of China, not least over Taiwan.

The best way to defend the People's Republic is for China to lead an anti-imperialist struggle that could win the hearts and minds of billions in the Global South and encourage workers in the U.S. and Japan to fight back against the imperialists at home. Key to this strategy is the Chinese proletariat. With its central role in global production, mobilizing this force could choke off the imperialists' profits and change the whole reactionary dynamic they're imposing on the world. ***CPC: Stop kowtowing! Fight imperialism!*** ■

False hope...

(continued from page 28)

the main driver of the Green vote was a desire to give the finger to Labour and keep Reform out. Not confidence in the Greens' plan.

Manchester itself is a snapshot of what this country has become. The city centre has glitzy banks and luxury apartments with sky-high rents. These sit side-by-side with some of the most deprived areas of the country, ravaged by shuttered factories and generations of unemployment and poverty. Under the watchwords of Blairism, Britain has become a deindustrialised wasteland, made to fatten the City of London, with entire areas of the country literally left to rot.

So how on earth is a 2% tax on the billionaires, or nationalising the utterly decrepit public utilities, supposed to fix this? And how will the Greens even get those measly measures? Through Parliament, of course. But the City of London, the establishment and their media mouthpieces will put up the most determined struggle against any attempts at touching their stolen wealth.

Any substantial wealth tax requires a powerful mobilisation of the working masses of this country in a head-to-head confrontation with the City of London. Only if they fear losing everything will the rich cough up some money. And it is by organising such a fight that the far right can be seriously undermined and the deep racial divisions among workers bridged. But this is not what the Greens are about. Rather, they fuel the illusion that tinkering with the tax system can fix this country—a notion which will crash on contact with reality.

Indeed, until now, the ruling class had pretty much ignored the Greens. This is changing, and we will soon see a torrent of attacks and dirty tricks aimed at putting maximum pressure on the party for it to capitulate and abandon its most radical demands. As the Greens seek to become a serious and respected force, and since they are not based on a working-class opposition to the entire system, their political direction of travel will be to the right, not to the left.

Stuck between the radical aspirations of a part of their new base, and the requirements of the ruling class's system in which the Green leaders want to work, they will dither, hesitate and compromise. This is what happened to Corbyn before. And this is the kind of weakness that fuels the far right, which is increasingly confident and ready to use radical and extra-parliamentary means to achieve its aims.

A "progressive" coalition?

The British ruling class will never let green hippies take command of the country. In turn, Zack Polanski himself does not really expect to become PM. So, what is the plan exactly? Starmer's days are numbered, and Polanski wants to become kingmaker in a new "progressive" coalition aimed at Reform, consisting of post-Starmer Labour and the Greens, undoubtedly with the support of the trade-union leaders, and maybe even the Lib Dems. Polanski has expressed his readiness to form such a coalition, and we already see it taking shape with the Together Alliance. (Of course, a special place will be reserved in this lash-up for Corbyn, who will happily hand over his crown as icon of the left to Polanski and get back to his allotment.)

Of course, as we noted, such an alliance will require that the Greens drop their most radical (and utopian) demands. But more importantly, the prospect of a Labour-Green, anti-Reform coalition would be the greatest boost for Reform and the far right. It might get some electoral wins, but an alliance of socialists, Greens, all the way to Labour and the very people who broke Britain is the surest way to discredit the entire left, and strengthen Reform's credentials as the only anti-establishment option. This is what the New Popular Front in France was—and the result has been a massive strengthening of the far right.

The socialists who are today all gaga about the Greens—from Novara Media and Owen Jones to the SWP—are failing to see further than immediate electoral results. This will prove disastrous in the long run.

Tasks of socialists

The road ahead for the socialist left will be difficult. The Greens' victory in Gorton and Denton came the morning after the Corbyn faction defeated the Grassroots Left in the Your Party CEC elections. With the Corbynite wing firmly in charge, they will further align Your Party behind wishy-washy liberal politics virtually indistinguishable from the Greens, while purging the left wing. The truth is that the Greens have now occupied the space that opened up on Labour's left flank, with Your Party now a near-irrelevant factor in the landscape. This means that the window for socialist politics getting mass appeal is closing for now.

For socialists, it is absolutely vital to resist the Polanski-mania. What is still needed is a fighting, working-class and socialist party, able to fight Labour and Reform, and offer what the liberal Greens can't. This isn't easy or quick, but there is no other road.

How to get there? What is needed is to regroup all those elements who still want to fight for this and draw serious lessons from the last period. One of the main reasons the far left hasn't been able to make any breakthroughs is that it has failed to counterpose a coherent political answer to the Greens, as well as to Corbyn, who, in fact, has almost identical views.

Rather, the far left has remained stuck in endless talks about internal "democracy", abstract propagandising, and a paralysing fear of fighting the Greens (and Corbyn). As we can see now, this has only served to sideline us. We must rearm. For

Furlong/Getty

13 September "Unite the Kingdom" rally. Workers have turned to the right because left propped up liberal status quo.

Cardy/Getty

uddin/Getty

Left: Hundreds have lost jobs at Port Talbot steelworks, Wales. City of London (right) destroyed industry, ruined Britain. Greens won't confront financial barons.

this, we should not quit Your Party. Rather, the Grassroots Left should elaborate a serious political answer to Reform, Labour and the Greens. We should fight inside Your Party for a programme that can really tap into working-class discontent, and offer what Corbyn and the Greens can't: a fighting perspective for a government of the working class against the City of London.

All the immediate issues facing workers in Britain—decrepit public services, deindustrialisation, the broken immigration system, the housing crisis, imperialist wars—are connected to the fact that the City of London dominates this country. By focusing on the City—that is, expropriation of big banks for the reindustrialisation of the country according to a plan—we can forge real unity among workers—both native and foreign-born—against their common enemy in a way liberal platitudes can't.

Only by putting forward a coherent programme can the socialist left fight the Corbyn wing in Your Party, distinguish itself from the Greens and build what is actually needed to defeat Reform. ■

Misogyny...

(continued from page 19)

only dim but serves a political purpose: if the problem is only based on bad ideas and social media, then there's no need to spend any real money on fixing anything. Instead, the government can entertain banning social media to save girls, or just extol the virtues of having good role models to fight the manosphere, and if all else fails, give the police more powers. In other words, it can get away with doing nothing that's good and more of what's terrible. Social media is a symptom, not the cause. And to fight the cause we need to qualitatively improve the lives of young people so they have no need to turn to reactionary answers. ***This means improving the entire country, starting with schools.***

The union needs to get it together!

This is where the NEU comes in. It wants to "save education". Good. But what does this look like and how will the union fight for it? Education will only be saved through massive funding, which can provide children with what they need to succeed—smaller classes so they can have real attention from teachers, additional support for all their learning needs, free meals, enough leisure time, etc. It will be saved when education workers have a huge reduction in workload and better conditions so that they don't quit due to burnout. It will be saved when schools are back in public hands and not under the control of parasitic academies. It will be saved when behaviour regimentation is no longer the means to stem the social crisis engulfing Britain.

All of this requires a fundamentally different game plan. Annual campaigns for more pay simply won't cut it, nor will liberal campaigns promoting teaching good ideas to bad boys. Teaching is a woman-dominated sector. This means the union must take up the fight against misogyny as one of its core planks, not just go along with government plans to train already overworked teachers to have more empathy for boys taking the mick. Yes, we want to fight misogyny. But this shouldn't be through our emotional labour. Rather, it should be through a struggle against the existing set-up of education linked to the fight against the social crisis confronting youth.

This is not as impossible as it sounds. The fight against the current education set-up starts with your school, and it starts with building the union at your school:

1) Join the union, recruit others and make the union your voice on the job.
2) Take a collective stand against workload creep—if you refuse together, management can't do anything about it.
3) Fight against strict behaviour policies—giving a million detentions will only fuel more tension between teachers and students.
4) Oppose senior management being in the union—and pressure the union to agree to this.
5) Build teacher-student unity—schools are failing both of you, and you are natural allies in fighting to change them.

Of course, these on their own do not solve the problem of misogyny in schools, let alone society. Misogynist attitudes must be challenged. Our problem isn't that the government and the union seek to do this. It's that they do this with methods which breed cynicism and invite a conservative backlash. In the case of the government, it pushes a cheap moralising propaganda campaign while overseeing the destruction of living standards. The NEU, for its part, echoes the government's campaign and offers no challenge to the status quo in schools.

The fight against misogyny will succeed to the extent that the fight for better schools, a better future for children and a better society succeeds. Only in the course of such a struggle will progressive ideas about gender actually find fertile ground. For this, the NEU needs to get it together and rethink its strategy to save education. ■

What next for Grassroots Left?

18 March 2026

Dear comrades,

The CEC elections in Your Party resulted in a big win for Corbyn's The Many (TM) slate. It secured a solid majority on the body (14 of 24 seats), with the Grassroots Left (GL) winning only seven. For those of us who campaigned for the

OPEN LETTER

GL and want a radical, socialist party, this isn't good. With a clear mandate, the Corbyn wing will proceed to build a party based on vague liberal politics indistinguishable from the Greens, go after proto-branches and purge the far left. To go forward, the GL needs to draw serious lessons.

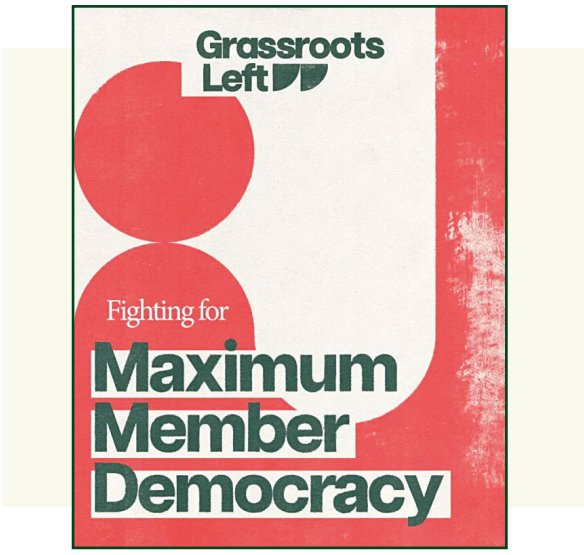
Not just a matter of resources

Many in the GL have tried to explain our defeat by pointing out that TM had more money, resources and access to larger mailing lists. Of course, this is true. But this is just stating the obvious. If the only lesson the GL draws is that the other side was stronger, then there is no point in critically reviewing what the GL actually did.

This is similar to those who explain Corbyn's downfall as Labour leader by saying that the right wing was stronger. Such explanations might make us feel better, but they are disorienting and false. Corbyn's leadership of Labour ended in disaster primarily because of key political mistakes he made. Similarly, in our opinion, the GL's results are primarily due to political blunders that ended up undermining its campaign. This is what we must debate and understand.

Members' democracy

The first mistake the GL made was to centre its campaign around "members' democracy". While members' democracy is important, everyone in the party claims to be for it, including Corbyn's side. With Your Party members fed up with factional struggle and demanding a clear vision to make Your Party work, GL's central appeal for "democracy" offered no clear way forward. Moreover, as TM made "turning outward" one of their central planks, the GL's insistence on "internal democracy", rules and structures only helped to strengthen TM's claims to be the only ones wanting to end "navel-gazing".



The GL should have focused its campaign on its radical positions and criticised TM on this basis. The GL's platform contained clear opposition to NATO, Zionism, the monarchy, as well as a call to expropriate key levers of the economy. ***These were GL's strong cards.*** And Corbyn's side was silent on those questions precisely because they do ***not*** want a party taking an explicit stance on those issues, as they sought to rally the most conservative elements. What was confusing to many members was that TM carefully avoided saying this openly.

Therefore, the task of the GL was to force TM out into the open on key political issues and expose their reformist and liberal politics in front of the membership. This was the only way the GL could have scored serious points against TM, while also making the lines of division much clearer to all.

But this was impossible so long as the GL's main appeal was based on internal party structures, which only made the differences between TM and the GL confusing. Now, members' democracy has spoken, and the GL is in a minority.

The fight for democracy

Some comrades in the GL often say that "without a democratic party, we cannot build a democratic society". This is a disorienting abstraction. The structure of a party flows from its goal. If your goal is to manage capitalism and appear respectable to the liberal middle class, you will build a bureaucratic party—because you will have to repress the radical aspirations of the base. This is why the trade unions and the Labour Party are so bureaucratic. And this is why the Your Party tops are such control freaks, obsessed with purging the far left.

How do we fight this? You cannot fight a bureaucracy based on "democracy". Ultimately, rules on paper cannot restrain a bureaucracy. Furthermore, campaigning for "democracy" will inevitably lead you into an incoherent bloc with people who have opposite political aims. We undoubtedly saw this in the GL. The only way for socialists to actually fight for party democracy is by waging a ***political struggle*** against the reformist and liberal politics that drive bureaucratism. This is how to cohere a solid opposition and actually win support among the base.

Conciliating Jeremy

In the TV show *The Wire*, Omar Little famously said: "You come at the king, you best not miss." The GL took on Corbyn, the king of the left, and…missed. This is another key mistake the GL made: it refused to take the fight directly to Corbyn and constantly conciliated him to "prove" we are not splitters. For example, it was a mistake to endorse Corbyn on the slate. This only helped to give him a huge majority, while TM did not bother with such fake diplomacy.

Everyone in the GL knows that Corbyn's tepid speeches for "peace" and "social justice" are just liberal. We all know that

Sultana's radical speeches against capitalism are qualitatively different. Yet no one in the GL wants to say this openly—Zarah Sultana in particular. Rather, throughout the campaign, GL candidates too often went out of their way to declare their support for Jeremy, entertaining the illusion that our politics were compatible with his.

It was perfectly possible to take on Corbyn, provided that our attacks targeted his politics and avoided any demagogy or personalism. Again, attacking Corbyn on the terrain of "democracy" was never going to work. But exposing him for defending a liberal vision of "socialism", closer to the UN charter than class-struggle politics, could have resonated among a broader layer of the party. It is also by focusing on Corbyn's politics and explaining why they will not work that the accusation of being "splitters" can be easily dismissed. We just had to make our case, letting TM respond and inevitably expose themselves.

The GL's conciliation of Corbyn is the classic left Labourite mistake: subordinate your socialist politics to unity with the right wing. This is exactly what happened in Labour. Back then, Corbyn's camp (the left) refused to organise a real struggle against the Blairites. The argument was the same: the need for "unity" in the party. Corbyn himself learned this from his mentor, Tony Benn, who would not break from Denis Healey. In the end, this always serves to strengthen the right, which then goes on to purge the left.

The GL's non-aggression pact with Corbyn (which was always one-sided, by the way) strengthened TM. The GL got none of the rewards of its diplomacy while also missing a prime opportunity to make a serious criticism of Corbynism—something desperately needed on the left.

Incoherent politics

Because the GL built itself primarily around "members' democracy" rather than a solid programme, it sometimes reacted to events incoherently, falling into TM's traps.

For example, on the Green Party. The GL statement on the Gorton and Denton by-election was correct to oppose the Greens, but it did so in a sterile and unconvincing manner. This only maximised the backlash against the GL. Then Sultana broke ranks and endorsed the Greens, giving the green light to others in the GL to do the same. The GL ended up with two contradictory positions, with the benefit of neither. It was absolutely correct to resist the Green-mania, and Sultana was just being opportunist. However, to arm comrades in the face of strong pressure, the GL had to develop a serious argument against the Greens—something which is obviously still needed.

Another example: one of TM's central planks was mending relations with the Muslim community. Of course, this was totally empty, but it did point to a real problem. The left does need to develop a strategy to win over Muslims, including socially conservative ones, which does ***not*** consist in throwing trans people under the bus. Of course, TM had no answer to this, but neither did the GL. To simply say that socially conservative Muslims have "no place" in Your Party is liberal and deepens the divide. This is a question that still needs to be resolved and will continue to be a problem for the left. (We wrote about this multiple times. See, for example, "Sultana's disastrous comment", *Workers Hammer* supplement, September 2025).

Lastly, the final weeks of the campaign saw a sharp increase in slander. It was necessary to keep a cool head, stick to politics and not stoop to this level. As non-white comrades (Candi in particular) faced racist abuse online, it was necessary to strongly condemn this rubbish. But the GL statement on racist bullying was vague and did not mention any names or concrete instances. Rather than a sharp and clear denunciation of racists, it vaguely criticised a whole array of attitudes which may (or may not) be racist, from not listening to criticising strongly. Frankly, this was liberal identity politics, which discredited the GL. But more importantly, it failed to properly defend comrades from actual racist abuse!

Zarah Sultana

Sultana opposes Corbyn's purge from Labour in 2020. How times have changed…

For us, each of these points shows how the GL's lack of political coherence, as well as softness on liberal politics, undermined its campaign at various stages.

What next?

TM has a clear majority. No doubt they will go after the far left and proto-branches. Furthermore, Your Party is now marginal. The vacuum to the left of Labour has decisively been filled by the Green Party. What should we do?

The GL needs to develop and offer what it did not during the election campaign: a clear, socialist programme which can tap into working-class anger. When we say programme, we do not mean a detailed policy proposal to enact when we take power. This isn't what we need right now. The issue we confront is how to break our isolation and become a real factor in the workers movement. A good programme should draw clear socialist lines on the decisive issues and answer what to do in today's struggle. It should attack Reform UK and Labour but also the Green Party, sharply distinguishing itself from the liberal politics of Corbyn ***and*** Zack Polanski.

It is by putting forward such a programme that we can cohere the GL on solid political foundations. And it is also how we can resist purges and bureaucratic measures. If the GL continues to abstractly campaign for internal democracy, the CEC majority will be able to present us as mere obstructionists with nothing to offer. If, on the other hand, we put forward a path to make Your Party work, it will be much harder to move against us.

Lastly, we must resist the pressure of mindless activism. There is a real risk of burnout and demoralisation among many. But crucially, the problems confronting the left in (and out of) Your Party will not be overcome by more activism. What is needed is serious thinking and debate.

Comradely,
Vincent David
for the Spartacist League

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is on social media
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TOGETHER WITH LABOUR? HELL NO!

The Starmer government is widely reviled, and as it staggers from one catastrophe to the next it brings ever closer the likelihood that Nigel Farage will form the next government. That is a scary prospect. It will mean ICE-style raids to hunt down migrants, mass deportations and much more. Reform UK also promises to make the country more slavish in its support to the American empire and Zionist Israel than anything we've seen under Starmer, and meanwhile, it has no solution whatsoever to the dire economic crisis other than to grind the working class further into the ground.

The question of what to do about the growth of the right is the most serious challenge facing the left and the workers movement today. The solution that is currently on offer is the Together Alliance's 28 March London demonstration for "love, hope, unity". It is being heavily promoted by the trade union leadership and the SWP, and is shaping up to be ***the*** anti-racism event on the calendar. While we too want to defeat Reform, we must warn: the Together Alliance will do nothing to dent its growing support. In fact, this alliance with Labour based on liberal, "peace and love" politics risks further pushing workers into Farage's arms.

Many trade unionists and left activists are working tirelessly to build this event. At the same time, many know in their hearts that a demo offering only "feel-good factor" will be useless against Farage, but are afraid to speak out for fear of being branded as soft on racism. We must be frank: it is absurd to think that you can fight the far right based on moral platitudes, whose purpose is to bury any semblance of a working-class perspective.

Lessons of the Robinson debacle

The Together Alliance's 28 March demonstration is the left's answer to last September's massive Tommy Robinson march that brought hundreds of thousands out on the streets, and had many more workers than the tiny left-led counter-demo. That was a disaster and a wake-up call. We insisted that the lesson for the left was to seriously rethink their strategy and reorient ***away from*** their alliance with Establishment politicians, ditch their liberal politics and direct their efforts to winning the working class (see "13 September: Disaster for the left" *Workers Hammer* supplement, 13 September 2025). Simply put, to halt the rise of the right, we need to build a pro-working-class, socialist opposition to the Starmer government and the whole British Establishment.

Try to think of more hippy-dippy slogans. You can't.

Instead of trying to unite the working class, including migrants, for a struggle against the government, the SWP drew the ***opposite*** conclusion. They doubled down and went even more liberal. This is how the "Together Alliance" was born. To understand the problem with this, let's look concretely at who the Alliance wants us to unite with.

The endorsers' list includes the usual cast of celebs, who certainly won't have Farage shaking in his shoes. (Let's face it, if Bruce Springsteen and Beyoncé couldn't swing it for Kamala Harris, Paloma Faith and Billy Bragg won't turn the tide against Reform). Of course, Zack Polanski will be there—no show without Punch. There are a number of Muslim religious organisations, including the Muslim Council of Britain and Muslim Association of Britain, which may be good for the optics but doesn't mean the Muslim masses will be mobilised. Indeed, why should Muslims attend a gig which has nothing to do with defending their communities against racist provocations such as UKIP threatened in London's Whitechapel last year? For that matter, Together's material carefully avoids mentioning the "P" word—no doubt support for the Palestinians would scare off some of the more respectable types.

The vague, apolitical slogans of Together are thus all designed to keep this thing respectable for establishment politicians and careerists, which will only repel workers, including immigrant workers.

Unity with…the government

But what gives this event its decisive, anti-working-class character is its "togetherness" with Labour. It is supported by a gaggle of backbench Labour MPs. Among others, they include Richard Burgon, Clive Lewis and Dawn Butler. These people are part of the party in power, and while they sometimes disagree with Starmer, they support his government!

At the London launch of the Together Alliance in February, to their credit, the Revolutionary Communist Group staged a protest, heckling Butler that she should resign from the racist, genocidal Labour Party. She shot back, defending the government, saying "you have to be in a position of power to make decisions and to make things work". Yes, the Labour Party is making decisions—supporting the US and Israel's wars, up to their ears in scandals, and yet has totally failed to solve any of the economic or social problems the country faces.

It is one thing to have a united front to stop a fascist attack, including with the Labour Party. But it is another to build an

Kitwood/Getty

Labour MP Dawn Butler, prominent endorser of Together Alliance.

alliance with defenders of the government, for a carnival of "love". Far from winning workers away from Reform, it will further push them into their arms.

Generals without an army

As if linking arms with the Starmer government wasn't enough, the Together Alliance embraces the wretched trade union leaders. These bureaucrats helped propel Starmer into No 10 and now that he's on the ropes, they are going all-in with the Together Alliance as a way to refurbish Labour's credentials. These general secretaries, most of whom make six-figure salaries, are "generals without armies", totally divorced from the needs of their members. When they put an effort into this type of initiative, you can be sure the push isn't coming from their base. It just means the bureaucrats smell an opportunity to look good.

The Together Alliance demo will feature the usual cast of "progressive" general secretaries, like Andrea Egan of Unison and the RMT's Eddie Dempsey. But the icing on the cake is the fact that this event is supported by Sharon Graham of Unite… of all people! Graham is known for her support for NATO's Ukraine war and for having opposed Palestine solidarity actions against arms manufacturers. Also, those socialists who are promoting this demo should try preaching to the Birmingham bin strikers about love, hope and togetherness with Labour and Sharon Graham! They have waged an all-out strike for a full year against the Labour-run City Council and the government's commissioners while Graham has refused to escalate the strike. To quote a strike militant who complained to our comrades that Unite keeps telling them to canvass MPs and councillors: "they couldn't give two sh*ts about us".

Throughout the country, many workers are turning to Reform because they are so utterly disgusted with Labour and the union leaders. One industrial plant after another has closed: from the Port Talbot steel plant to the Vauxhall Luton car plant to the Grangemouth oil refinery. Workers are turning away in droves from union leaders who have presided over the managed decline of the union movement, doing nothing to fight back. And what they resent even more is when those union leaders use union dues to build parades in central London in cahoots with Labour.

Labour politicians and trade union leaders have a huge responsibility for the situation that allows Reform to present itself as the only radical force that can take on the elites who are responsible for the country's rot.

What to do?

So, the 28 March demo is sponsored by the very forces who are driving workers into the arms of right-wing reaction. The prospect of the left marching arm-in-arm with Labour, the trade union leaders and the Greens will stand as further proof that the left is in bed with the government and the Establishment. As such, the Together Alliance will rebound to the benefit of the right.

There is no "quick fix" or easy solution to the problem we face, but that is not an excuse for the left to surrender the fight against the right to the SWP and liberals. We need to build a real, working-class alternative to Reform ***and*** Labour, which can rally the working class in a fight against those who have destroyed this country: the City of London bankers. Obviously, this is the opposite of what Together is about (or the Green Party, for that matter, see back page).

As an immediate step, union members who are being bombarded with appeals to support the Together Alliance should take a stand in their branch meetings. Militants should argue that, if there's a fascist provocation, by all means, this branch will mobilise and help to crush this threat. But this isn't what 28 March is about. Militants should argue ***against*** being mobilised for an event whose main goal is to unite behind this anti-working-class government. We can use this opportunity to put forward what is really needed to fight Farage. If your branch nevertheless votes to endorse the demonstration, militants should march with their union contingents, but they must distinguish themselves and seek to draw a class line in this "love fest". The same goes for socialists, Your Party members, etc.

If you march, do so at least with clear signs which state: ***Together with Labour: No way!*** ■

Workers Hammer

Spartacist contingent at 13 September 2025 protest against far right. Liberal politics is dead end for the left.

A FALSE HOPE

Green Party

Feel-good liberal politics won't win workers from the right.

FEBRUARY 28—The entire left is ecstatic over the historic win for the Greens in Gorton and Denton. We have to admit: the Greens managed to run an effective campaign which captured the hatred of Labour and Reform UK, particularly but not only among Muslims. The new MP Hannah Spencer, a worker and Mancunian, was thus able to take this rock-solid Labour seat, driving another nail into Starmer's coffin. In response, the Greens faced vile attacks from both parties. But while Reform lost, they did come second with a huge increase in their share of the vote. Now, these sore losers are claiming election fraud with bogus claims of "family voting"—an anti-Muslim trope.

The joy at Reform's defeat is understandable. For years, Reform has been steadily rising unopposed—thanks to Labour's disastrous government. Now, many on the left think that, while the Greens might be far from perfect, we finally have a left-wing vehicle that can stop it. However, we must warn that this is a dangerous illusion. While the Green Party can win some elections, it cannot defeat the insurgent right wing.

Liberal idealism fuels the right

The steady rise of right-wing, anti-immigrant reaction—embodied in Reform, as well as Rupert Lowe's Restore Britain, Tommy Robinson, etc—isn't simply an electoral phenomenon. It reflects a deep anger among layers of the population—particularly in working-class areas—at the status quo of "Broken Britain" and the liberal political establishment. This isn't something that can be stemmed merely by tactical voting and electoral calculations. No. Rather, what is necessary is to channel this anger—currently mobilised against Muslims and immigrants—and redirect it against those who actually broke Britain: the City of London, capitalists, aristocrats and the liberal establishment which defends them. This is how working-class support for Reform can be fundamentally undermined.

Obviously, the Green Party cannot and will not do this. Its programme and outlook are a more radical, and frankly utopian, version of liberal ideology. The Greens are staunchly pro-EU, pro-Ukraine, ecologists, advocates of identity politics and social liberalism. Despite Polanski's rebranding of the party, it offers no serious answers to the problems of Britain, other than a series of feel-good slogans about "togetherness", "hope" and "humanity" and policies based on wishful thinking. Anti-immigrant bigotry is countered with "love thy neighbour". Polanski wants to solve the Ukraine war by evoking Nelson Mandela, the UN and nuclear disarmament. And for the Greens, bringing Britain back on track largely means undoing Brexit.

The issue with this mish-mash is not that it "isn't perfect". It is that ***it will push workers further into the arms of the far right.*** Working people are rebelling precisely against this type of "progressive" and moralist stuff. They are turning to the right wing because it offers some sort of a break with the liberal status quo. Therefore, clinging to the values of the liberal era—and cranking them up a notch—will not solve this problem but only make it worse.

This does not mean that the Greens cannot win some seats, particularly where there are immigrant communities who rightly fear Reform, or enough middle-class voters. But ultimately, for working people who have seen their lives destroyed, the Greens' appeal for "peace, love and hope" will be no match for the insurgent calls of the far right to smash liberals, immigrants and Muslims.

You can't tweak Broken Britain

What confuses many leftists is that Polanski is transforming the Greens. From a middle-class, "Tories on bicycles" image, the Greens now barely talk about the environment. Instead, they campaign on the cost of living, nationalisations of public utilities and taxing the rich.

Whatever people may think of the Greens' promises, very few outside the leftist bubble seriously believe that their economic policies will fix this country. In Gorton and Denton,

continued on page 22